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The American University in Cairo  
School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

*Quaker Activity in Ramallah: 1869 - 1914*

A Thesis Submitted by

*Catherine C.B. Baylin*

to the Middle East Studies Center

June 2010

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Master of Arts in Middle East Studies

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# **Quaker Activity in Ramallah, 1869 – 1914**

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In 1867, two Quaker missionaries set out from Maine to visit Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria and establish schools for girls. Although the legacy of their trip can be seen today in the Quaker schools and churches in Brummana, Lebanon and Ramallah, Palestine, only a few Orthodox Christians and no Muslims joined the Protestant sect. Both Brummana and Ramallah have a long history of Quaker schools, hospitals, clinics, and religious outreach, but today a Quaker gathering on a typical Sunday morning would have only a few participants. In Ramallah, the first missionaries laid the foundation for more than a century of cooperation and competition among Americans and Palestinians as they struggled to define what a Quaker community in Palestine would look like and who would control the direction of the mission.

The story of the Quakers in Ramallah is one thread of the complex tapestry of Arab-American relations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Quakers were not the first missionaries in the Middle East nor did they establish influential universities or achieve the most conversions. Several aspects of the Quaker mission, however, make it an interesting case study in the development of cross-cultural relations. First, Quaker theology emphasizes equality among all people. The idea of universal equality between men and women, Americans and Palestinians, was in fact interpreted differently and implemented to varying degrees. Yet as a guiding principle, this aspect of Quaker theology tended to support anti-colonial movements even as the Quakers were part of the movement to evangelize the Middle East. Additionally, the mission institutions were almost entirely run by local Christians for the first decade and a half. The ways in which these institutions have both shaped and been shaped by changing global power dynamics illuminate one small part of the evolution of Arab-American relations.

The evolution of Quaker institutions is a story of resistance and cooperation that illuminates some of the complex dynamics between missionaries and their intended converts. While Quakers encountered pockets of resistance, many Greek Orthodox Christians and some Muslims competed for the opportunity to educate their children in Quaker schools. By the early twentieth century, Quakers were running half a dozen day schools with more than 250 students and spots in their boarding schools were highly coveted. Their medical facilities had become entrenched in the community. Quaker establishments were sites where local Arabs could access foreign cultures and languages and the foreigners could, to varying degrees, shape local morals and practices. Nevertheless, the particular details of the Quaker story do not obscure the overall situation in which missionaries were often closely aligned with colonial governments and actively promoting foreign religions and culture at the expense of local practices.

Quakers' relative success in establishing educational and medical services, as well as a permanent Meeting House, was only realized after their *failure* to convert a significant number of families. Theology, financial support, and international power were not able to convince many residents of Ramallah to actually identify as Quaker. Despite pressure from their funders in the United States and Britain, American Quakers in Palestine understood that conversions would be limited to a few families. They therefore devoted their attention to spreading American Protestant social and domestic practices through formal education, which was in high demand. This shift enabled them to fit in with the established practice of religious co-existence found in Ramallah during the Ottoman era. As Quakers adjusted their goals to fit the local realities and earned the trust of residents, the institutions they sponsored flourished.

Using memoirs and archival sources, including private letters and diaries, I argue that the Quaker mission is best understood not as a colonial project, but a space for interaction in which

Palestinians and Americans exerted varying levels of control over resources and plans. The colonial model for understanding the mission, with its top-down hierarchies, language of domination, and strict power imbalances, does not adequately describe the relations between missionaries, converts, and non-Quaker Arabs. As Ussama Makdisi notes, “rather than positing a dichotomy between colonizer and colonized...it is more fruitful to study colonialism in the case of the late Ottoman Empire as an arena of exchange.”<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, relationships between foreigners and locals were dynamic. The mission was almost entirely under local control during the first 15 years, while foreign missionaries took a more active leadership role after the founding of the first boarding school in 1889.

## **Historical Overview**

Quakers, also known as members of the Society of Friends (or just Friends), have played important roles in the history of Ramallah and surrounding villages. Quaker involvement in non-violent resistance has been highly visible on the international scene and often overshadows the lesser-known aspects of their work in the region. Today, Quakers operate two large schools, maintain a Meeting House<sup>2</sup> in the center of the city<sup>3</sup> and run a children’s program in the nearby Amari refugee camp.<sup>4</sup> Quakers are active in Christian movements against the occupation of the West Bank, such as the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel, which brings international observers to witness human rights violations and protect vulnerable communities.<sup>5</sup> The Friends schools, widely considered the most elite in Ramallah and

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<sup>1</sup> Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000), 8.

<sup>2</sup> Most Quakers do not use the word “church” to refer to their buildings or services, believing that the true church is the community of believers. Modern Evangelical Quakers may use “church” instead of “meeting.”

<sup>3</sup> The Friends International Center in Ramallah, “Ramallah Friends Meeting,” <http://www.ramallahquakers.org>.

<sup>4</sup> Global Ministries, “Quaker Play Center, Amari Refugee Camp,” Friends United Meeting, <http://www.fum.org/worldmissions/FriendsPlayCentrePalestine.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel, <http://www.eappi.org/en/home.html>.

surrounding area, are perhaps the most noticeable physical legacy of Quaker missionaries in Palestine.

The arrival of Quakers in the Middle East was part of a wave of American evangelical Protestants movements abroad. Eli and Sybil Jones of South China, Maine, and two British Friends visited towns in what is now Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and the West Bank. Ramallah, a small Christian town about six miles north of Jerusalem, was one of their stops. The town had been predominantly Christian since its founding in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and most residents were members of the Greek Orthodox Church. Eli and Sybil were not the first or the only foreign missionaries in the town at this time. The Roman Catholic Church established a boys' school in 1857, and a Catholic order of nuns opened a girls schools in 1873.<sup>6</sup> These developments were typical of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>7</sup> as the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire were becoming increasingly open to foreign political, economic, and religious involvement.

Ramallah was located at the northern end of the Ottoman administrative area around Jerusalem. In the Ottoman Empire, areas known as *sancaks* (districts) made up larger regional administrative areas known as *vilayet* (provinces).<sup>8</sup> The countryside around Ramallah was divided, mostly falling within the *sancak* of Jerusalem but partially located in the bordering *sancak* of Nablus.<sup>9</sup> After World War I, Great Britain assumed control of territories then called Palestine and Transjordan under a mandate from the League of Nations, which lasted until 1948. During British rule Ramallah was not a particularly large or important town, but gained prominence as the central city of the West Bank in the second half of the 20th century.

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<sup>6</sup> Naseeb Shaheen, *A Pictorial History of Ramallah* (Beirut, Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1992), 21.

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation 1856 – 1882* (Washington D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993), 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 17

<sup>9</sup> Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus 1700 – 1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 30.



When the Quakers arrived in Ramallah, it was a relatively welcoming place for foreigners. During just a short stay, the Joneses were able to open several schools in surrounding villages. According to an often-repeated legend, the educational project began when a young woman of 15 “accosted” Eli Jones in the street and asked him to open a school for girls. When he asked who was capable of teaching in the proposed school, his assailant volunteered her services.<sup>10</sup> Over the next several years, Quakers continued to fund several day schools which employed local teachers and taught both boys and girls. Most of the students were Christians, but Muslim students attended as well. Twenty years after the Joneses’ first visit, the Quaker Training Home for Girls in Ramallah opened its doors to boarding students. During the first year, it was a challenge to find enough families who would agree to send their girls away to school, even though tuition was free and clothing was provided.<sup>11</sup> Attitudes changed, however, and by 1905 that boarding school had become the most successful girls’ school in Palestine, according to the United States Consul in Jerusalem. Christian (and later Muslim) girls came from all over the region to attend.<sup>12</sup> In 1901, Quakers opened a boarding school for boys that was so popular it had to turn away dozens of paying students. In addition to their educational work, Quakers had also established a medical mission and opened a Meeting House in 1910.

## **Review of the Literature**

While missionary activity in the Middle East is a hotly debated topic, few historians have written explicitly about Quakers and even fewer have gone beyond documenting dates, names, and places. Histories of Quakers and Quaker missions often give only cursory attention to the early years in the Middle East. Those that do address this time period focus exclusively on chronicling events and contain little analysis or contextualization. Pink Dandelion’s *An*

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<sup>10</sup> Rosa Lee, *The Story of Ram Allah Mission* (Manchester: The Nutfield Press, 1912), 8.

<sup>11</sup> Wilma Wilcox, *Quaker Volunteer: An Experience in Palestine* (Friends United Press, 1977), 10.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

*Introduction to Quakerism* is typical in devoting a few pages to the missionary movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and mentioning Ramallah only in passing.<sup>13</sup> Edward Miligan's *The Past is Prologue: 100 Years of Quaker Overseas Work* provides a few more details of the founding of the mission but gives no context or historical background.<sup>14</sup> These sources do not situate Quaker work abroad in the larger current of American missionary fever; nor do they consider any of the particularities of work in Palestine.

The most complete history was written in 1980 by Christina Jones, who was affiliated with the Friends Boys School (FBS) in the 1920s and again in the 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>15</sup> Her *Friends in Palestine* offers an engaging narrative of the history of the mission, although one without any documented sources. Writing from the vantage point of 1980, she situates her narrative within the context of post-1948 events. Aneesa Ma'louf, a Palestinian Quaker, published an Arabic history around 1940.<sup>16</sup> Like Christina Jones, Ma'louf narrates the story of the mission, beginning with the Eli and Sybil Jones' journey from New England, as a memoir and cites no sources for her information. These histories provide valuable first-hand descriptions, but the authors largely ignore the local political and religious context and global power dynamics that allowed Quaker missionaries and their institutions to function as they did. When describing the time period under study, the authors focus on individual missionary stories and descriptions of the physical landscape.

Recent scholarship has considered the Quaker mission more analytically, although much of it remains unpublished. Enaya Othman's 2009 dissertation, *The American Friends Mission in*

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<sup>13</sup> Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 159.

<sup>14</sup> Edward Miligan, *The Past is Prologue: 100 Years of Quaker Overseas Work* (London: Friends Service Council, 1968), 10.

<sup>15</sup> Christina Jones, *Friends in Palestine* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1981).

<sup>16</sup> Aneesa Ma'louf, *ja'mīa al-'āṣḍiqā' al-'āmrīkīa fī filisṭīn min sana ١٨٦٩-١٩٣٩* (*The Society of Friends in Palestine from 1869 to 1939*), (Cairo: The Modern Egyptian Press, n.d., ca 1940).

*Ramallah, Palestine: A Case Study of American-Arab Encounter, 1869 – 1948*, discusses the ways in which the Friends Girls School served as a cross-cultural meeting ground for Americans and Palestinians.<sup>17</sup> Othman argues that these relationships were not characterized by domination, but by mutual respect and shared values. She argues that this was even truer after the World War I, when the American missionaries began to value Palestinian culture to a greater degree. Jamal 'Adawi's unpublished Hebrew dissertation, *American Quaker Activities in Palestine, 1869 – 1948*, details the evolution of the Quaker enterprises until the creation of the State of Israel.<sup>18</sup> 'Adawi examines why Quakers chose Ramallah, how their approach to education set their schools apart from other missionary schools, the Ottoman reaction to Quaker missionaries, the transfer of school administration from American to Palestinian hands, and the impact Quakers had on Ramallah and Palestine.

Thomas Ricks' biography of a prominent Quaker Palestinian educator, Khalil Totah, offers unparalleled insight into his life and career through extensive study of Totah's personal documents, diaries, and published work. Totah's parents were Palestinian Quakers who had converted from the Greek Orthodox Church. He was the first student at the newly opened Boys Training Home in 1901, and later returned as a teacher and principal. Totah was a leading thinker in Palestinian education, publishing several books in both English and Arabic.<sup>19</sup>

While research specific to Quakers is somewhat limited, the broader subject of Christian missionaries has been studied more frequently. Missionary histories are easy to essentialize as tales of cultural imperialism or clashes between civilizations. The 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the

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<sup>17</sup> Enaya Othman, "The American Friends Mission in Ramallah, Palestine: A Case Study of American-Arab Encounter, 1869 – 1948" PhD Dissertation, Marquette University, 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Jamal 'Adawi, "P'ilut ha-qweiqerim ha-amerikanim be-palestina, 1869-1948" (The Activities of the Quakers in Palestine from 1869 to 1948), PhD Dissertation, University of Haifa, 2000.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas M Ricks, *Eyewitness to Turbulent Times in Palestine: The Ramallah Diaries of Khalil Totah, 1886-1955* (Ramallah: Institute of Jerusalem Studies, 2009).

publication of several influential anti-missionary treatises in Arabic, primarily written from Cairo. Heather Sharkey details how these authors equate missionary activity with imperialism, linking missionaries, colonialism, and Western Orientalist scholarship.<sup>20</sup> They argue that missionaries were part of a cultural onslaught against Islam and Arabic, denigrating both local religion and language. Although the arguments rely on generalizations, they resonate with some of the missionary's own accounts. Some missionaries explicitly saw themselves as modern Crusaders, intent on conquering and re-claiming holy lands.<sup>21</sup> In certain ways, they were the advance forces of colonialism, spreading Western cultural values and languages, creating local communities with interests that aligned with Western powers, and occasionally sharing information with their governments and military wings. While the anti-missionary writings did not specifically target the Friends Mission, critics could have pointed to the financial backing Quakers received from Friends in the United States and Britain as well as consular protection from the British government, which helped missionaries promote their culture at the expense of local people.

George Antonius' classic *The Arab Awakening*, first published in 1938, opposes these types of arguments. Antonius highlights the role of missionaries in 'awakening' Arab nationalism and identity. He traces Arab nationalism to the Christian printing presses and schools which missionaries established in Beirut. According to Antonius, the missionaries were the 'foster-parents' of Arab nationalism and inspired a literary revival which spilled into the political realm.<sup>22</sup> Far from denigrating the Arabic language, missionaries revived it. This

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<sup>20</sup> Heather Sharkey, "Arabic antimissionary treatises: Muslim responses to Christian evangelism in the modern Middle East," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Jul 2004), 98.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example: Julius Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions in the Near East* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), 14.

<sup>22</sup> George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1946), 37.

argument was later widely criticized for falsely positing a direct connection between the predominantly Lebanese Christian literary circles and wider Arab nationalism.<sup>23</sup>

Since Antonius' work in the 1930s, English-language scholarship has frequently marginalized missionaries. This oversight may be because of discomfort with the overt proselytizing, as opposed to the more benign social work, which characterized 19<sup>th</sup> century missions. As conversion efforts became less popular in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, previous missionary activities have become almost embarrassing. One notable exception is A.L. Tibawi's *American Interests in Syria 1800 – 1901*, published in 1966.<sup>24</sup> Tibawi engaged with the political context of missionary activity and considered the relationship between missionaries, their home governments, and the Ottoman central government.

Despite the paucity of general missionary histories, missionaries and church groups continued to document, evaluate, and promote their activities.<sup>25</sup> These accounts tend to focus exclusively on individuals and small institutions, while ignoring larger themes in Middle Eastern history. They are usually devoid of global context except as it impacts the individual. They generally do not discuss colonialism or foreign relations. Individual memoirs often treat war merely as an interruption and disregard shifts in the balance of international power. Missionaries themselves are generally portrayed as outside observers who are part of a spiritual undertaking that is unconnected to a political project in any way. These works are individualistic and yet generic; by failing to put their work in context, missionaries often position their work as part of an international, global narrative of attempted conversions that disregards local specificity.<sup>26</sup> They provide significant detail but do not put these stories in the larger context of diplomatic,

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<sup>23</sup> Albert Hourani, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1981), 204.

<sup>24</sup> A.L. Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria 1800 – 1901* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Samuel Zwemer, *The Unoccupied Mission Fields of Africa and Asia* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1911).

<sup>26</sup> Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 7.

cultural, economic, and military interaction between the Arab world, Europe, and the United States.

More recently, a wave of scholarship has reconsidered missionary engagement in the Middle East, contextualizing missionaries and their intended converts. Heather Sharkey's *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire* argues that Protestant missionaries in Egypt had a much larger effect than their limited number of conversions would indicate.<sup>27</sup> Missionary ideas on plurality, women, and social activism influenced both Muslim and Christian Egyptians. Furthermore, experiences in Egypt reshaped the missionaries and their approach toward members of other faiths. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Protestant missionaries moved away from seeking to spread their vision of salvation through conversion and focused on increasing mutual understanding through witness.<sup>28</sup>

In their edited volume *Altruism and Imperialism: Western Cultural and Religious Missions in the Middle East*,<sup>29</sup> Eleanor Tejirian and Reeva Simon directly engage with the complex relationships among imperialism, missionaries, evangelism, and cultural exchange. Mahmoud Haddad's article, "Syrian Muslim Attitudes Toward Foreign Missionaries in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," is perhaps the most relevant to Quakers in Ramallah. While Haddad considers broad trends in reactions to missionaries and considers interpretations by great thinkers, such as the philosopher Rashid Rida, the scope of the article is limited. Haddad also does not consider the real choices about education and daily life facing Arabs living near missions.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 217.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>29</sup> Eleanor Tejirian and Reeva Simon, eds., *Altruism and Imperialism: Western Cultural and Religious Mission in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University, 2002).

<sup>30</sup> Mahmoud Haddad, "Syrian Muslims' Attitudes Toward foreign Missionaries in the late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in Tejirian and Simon, 258.

Ussama Makdisi's *Artillery of Heaven* offers a radically new way to approach missionaries and the Arab world. Makdisi considers the very early missionaries and their first convert, As'ad Shidyaq, a Maronite who died while imprisoned by the Orthodox Church for refusing to renounce his conversion to Protestantism.<sup>31</sup> Makdisi roots his arguments in understandings of the American missionary fervor, as it developed in missions to Native Americans, and the complex political and religious arrangements in the Ottoman Levant in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. While critiquing most previous missionary scholarship for being limited to the American or European perspective, Makdisi uses sources from both sides of the Atlantic, including missionary archives, Orthodox Church documents, and As'ad Shidyaq's diary.

Makdisi's approach is both local and global. While positioning the individuals in his narrative firmly within the larger context, he rejects depicting missionary encounters as a "clash of cultures" or oversimplifying missionaries as either imperialists or liberators. Instead, he recognizes the specificity of this particular "cultural encounter that pitted one group of Americans against one group of Ottoman subjects in a specific time and place."<sup>32</sup> His approach invites historians to continue telling other missionary accounts because, as he says, As'ad Shidyaq's story is only one of many. Just as Shidyaq does not represent all Arabs, the first Protestant missionaries do not represent all later missionaries or those from different Christian denominations. Arab-American interactions can only be understood as a collection of these stories, not through any particular ideology, be it imperialism or anti-colonialism, which ignores certain narratives while neatly fitting the remaining details into a convenient worldview.

Building on Makdisi's approach, this thesis examines the dynamic interactions between Quaker missionaries and residents of Ramallah and surrounding villages during the Ottoman and

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<sup>31</sup> Makdisi, 2008, 2.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 6.

British mandate periods. While recognizing the centrality of these individual and local relationships, the particular ways in which the Quaker mission in Ramallah developed can only be understood in the context of social and political movements in the United States and the wider Middle East. The presence of American missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a product of the missionary fervor sweeping Christian universities and churches throughout the United States, encouraging young people to take the message of Christianity across borders. Missionaries benefited from the general religious tolerance of the Ottoman Empire, coupled with the Sublime Porte's relative indifference towards missionary work within Christian communities. Furthermore, the power dynamic between the Ottoman central government and the British and American representatives did not (usually) permit the Ottomans to expel or prohibit missionary activity.

Despite the proliferation of missionary activity, including schools, hospitals, and printing presses, most missionaries were not highly successful in converting Arabs, particularly Muslims. Given these failures, missionaries constantly had to re-evaluate their approach, often shifting their focus from explicit conversion to more educational or cultural projects that aligned with the interests of the local population. Missionary interactions were therefore dynamic spaces in which cultures and power relations were constantly re-negotiated and re-defined. As Othman illustrates in her dissertation, the Quaker schools were negotiated spaces in which Arabs and Americans interacted without one group consistently dominating the other. This shift away from overt proselytizing contributed to the success of Quaker institutions.

### **Sources and Methodology**

This study is based primarily on published memoirs and archival material in the Friends House library in London and the Haverford College Quaker Special Collections in



Pennsylvania.<sup>33</sup> Published records include histories, journals, pamphlets and school yearbooks. Additionally, several collections of unpublished letters and journals share scenes of everyday life and details of private matters. Several of the teachers at the Friends' schools wrote histories of Quaker involvement in Palestine and Syria, including work in Brummana, Lebanon.<sup>34</sup> Most of these works were written by American teachers and published in English, but Aneesa Ma'louf published her history in Arabic from Cairo.<sup>35</sup> Several missionaries and their families have also published journals and first-hand accounts of their work. These include some journals from the 19th century and several from the early 20th, particularly from the time period just before World War II.<sup>36</sup>

Accounts of the Quaker schools and Mission can also be found in reports authored by missionaries for American and British audiences. Many of these pamphlets and papers were designed to encourage fund-raising efforts and do not take a critical approach to Quaker activities. They do, however, provide a window into how Friends framed and championed their work. The mission also published a monthly (later quarterly) newsletter from 1903 to 1911. These newsletters describe the relations with local villages, give progress reports on evangelical activities, and provide general information about Ramallah and the surrounding towns. Quaker schools also documented their activities in yearbooks and annual reports.

In addition to these published accounts, some of the personal papers of the principal actors are preserved in archives. Eli and Sybil Jones left a substantial body of journals, letters, and artifacts, such as passports, which document their work in Ramallah. These records detail

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<sup>33</sup> Other private archives, such as the Indiana Friends Meeting, and some national collections, such as the British National Archives, also contain some relevant sources but were not used for this study.

<sup>34</sup> Lee, 1912; Christina Jones, *Friends in Palestine* (Richmond, IN: American Friends Board of Missions, 1944). Christina Jones published two books with the same name, one in 1944 and one in 1981.

<sup>35</sup> Ma'louf, 1944.

<sup>36</sup> Nancy McDowell, *Notes from Ramallah, 1939* (Richmond: Friends United Press, 2002); Sydney Hunt, *The Joyful Traveler: Wanderings of Sydney Hunt, 1932-1934* (Philadelphia: Friends Publishing Corporation, 2003).

their private motivations, concerns, and challenges. Khalil Totah also left a large collection of letters and diaries that document the daily life and political challenges facing the Mission and schools between World War I and II. These documents are particularly valuable in providing insight into more mundane aspects of the mission, since the minutes from the Monthly Meeting were lost in the 1940s.<sup>37</sup>

While these sources are extensive, they are exclusively authored by Quakers, other missionaries, and Palestinian converts. This illustrates one of the challenges of using archives in colonial and neo-colonial settings. Archives are not neutral depositories of information. The archive itself can be a carefully constructed project, often led by the state or an institution to convey a particular set of messages or preserve a particular historical narrative. Private archives and individual collections are usually edited by the owner, his or her family, or the archivist. Archives of colonial periods often preserve history through the eyes of the powerful and deny the histories of subjugated groups.<sup>38</sup> Missionaries were often affiliated with colonial projects, and their archives share the biases and problems of those kept by colonial governments. Equating the Quaker missionaries with colonialists oversimplifies the complexity of their position;<sup>39</sup> however, it is not necessary to determine the extent to which missionaries were ‘colonial’ to appreciate the relevance of argument about colonial archives to missionary archives, both of which preserve records of ‘the other’ through related lenses of domination and conversion.

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<sup>37</sup> C. Jones, 1980, 89.

<sup>38</sup> Bhekizizwe Peterson, “The Archives and the Political Imaginary,” in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. C. Hamilton (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 29.

<sup>39</sup> To do so would wrongly project American hegemony back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and inaccurately portray American and European nations as part of a monolithic West. After the 1880s, the Ramallah mission was funded and supervised exclusively by Americans. The United States was not a colonial power in the Middle East at this time. Americans did not exercise economic or military domination, although the situation is complicated further by the fact that early American missionaries were under the protection of the British and later missionaries maintained close ties with the British government. In the broader sense of colonialism adopted in post-colonial literature, however, missionaries were part of an international system were supported power imbalances between the colonizer and the colonized and denied individuals living under colonial rule representation as full individuals.

. The very existence of Quaker archives, carefully preserved in universities, libraries, and Meeting Houses attests to the importance Quakers placed on creating a written record of their past. Quaker printing presses and journals provided ample opportunities to promote their writings. Missionaries in general shared this commitment to creating copious written evidence of their work, often through letters intended to be shared with communities and possibly published.

The archival material used in this study reflects a Quaker, American, affluent interpretation of which events warrant recording and which events do not count as ‘history.’ The collections reflect the particular understanding that allowed some interpretations to be voiced and others silenced, some priorities to be articulated while others went unspoken, and some voices to participate while others were excluded.<sup>40</sup> Palestinian voices are completely missing from early Quaker records and only emerged as Arabs joined Quaker institutions. Arabs gained a voice in the archives only in relation to the mission institutions and through modes of expression deemed appropriate, such as school yearbooks and essays for publication in the United States. At the same time, however, Palestinians challenged, changed, and appropriated missionary structures like the monthly reports and the school yearbooks. The fluidity of these spaces is perhaps most clearly illustrated by the fact that students often published their work in Arabic.

The omissions, nuances, and framing of documents confound the often implicit assumption that the archives contain all the relevant information and that this information can be collected and organized into a cohesive narrative. In fact, archives often provide a fragmented and incomplete picture, offering ample information about certain time periods, events, or people while obscuring others.<sup>41</sup> This paper, for instance, relies on journals and letters from those

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<sup>40</sup> Ann Laura Stoler. “Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance: On the Content in the Form,” in *Refiguring the Archive*, C. Hamilton, ed. (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 85.

<sup>41</sup> Achille Mbembe, “The Power of the Archive and its Limits,” in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. C. Hamilton (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 21.

missionaries who decided to publish or donate them, prioritizing their voices, impressions, and stories over those of individuals who kept their records private. In another example, we have significant insight into how Quakers promoted their work in Ramallah to Friends in the United States from 1903 to 1911, when they published a regular newsletter designed to raise awareness and funds, but no such source exists for the rest of the time period under study. More broadly, countless acts of resistance to missionary activity are related in passing, while successes generated a much longer paper trail. Archives also inherently privilege the written word over other types of information and minimize the orality and subjectivity present in many written sources. Receipts, minutes of meetings, and financial records convey an aura of objectivity when in fact they can reflect complex decisions about which details to include and which to let fall into obscurity.

Several different approaches have emerged to attempt to deal with the limitations on the search for objective knowledge within archives. Subaltern studies and alternative histories tell the stories of less powerful groups who were less likely to leave a rich archival record, such as workers, women, and the poor by introducing new sources and using traditional sources in non-conventional ways.<sup>42</sup> Oral histories value individual and collective memories without requiring the intermediary diary or letter, but they still have a selection bias. Historians choose whom to interview, and only certain memories will be recounted and preserved. Other scholars have looked outside of canonical archival material to literature and the arts for voices that are not found in traditional archives.<sup>43</sup>

Despite their limitations, written sources remain an important part of historical research. Acknowledging that archives and written sources are incomplete or framed in a certain way does

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<sup>42</sup> Stoler, 91.

<sup>43</sup> Carolyn Hamilton et al. "Introduction," in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. C. Hamilton (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 10.

not diminish their usefulness. Colonial and missionary archives offer a wealth of material on the experience of the colonizers and missionaries, but also on the ways in which subaltern actors and voices shaped the colonial spaces. Quaker archival material offers extensive insight into how the missionaries wrote about Ramallah and its inhabitants, which aspects of Palestinian life were considered in need of reform, how those attitudes changed over time, and how Palestinian Arabs, both Quaker and non-Quaker, shaped and eventually took over most Quaker institutions.

### **Chapter Outline**

This introduction has outlined the argument, approach, and sources while situating this thesis within Quaker and missionary studies. The following two chapters will set the stage, in both the United States and Ramallah, for the early encounters between Quakers and Arabs. The second chapter gives a history of Quaker practice and theology, with a focus on evangelical trends and foreign mission work including outreach to the Native Americans. Chapter 3 explores the political, economic, and religious layout of Ramallah and of the Ottoman Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with an emphasis on Christian communities and previous foreign missionaries. The next three chapters detail the Quaker mission. Chapter Four focuses on the period from 1869 to 1889, from the opening of the first day school to the opening of the Girls Training Home. During this period, foreign missionaries were not a strong presence within the mission, and the primary activities were medical assistance and village day schools with local teachers. Chapter Five focuses on 1889 to 1901, which was a period of expansion. The Girls Training Home opened in 1889 and the Monthly Meeting in 1890. Americans played an increasingly large role in mission management during this time of expansion and creation of new institutions. Chapter 6 describes the opening of the Boys Training Home in 1901 to the outbreak of the World War I. The thesis concludes in 1914, which marked not only the beginning of the war but also a turning point in

the relations between the Americans and Palestinians in the mission. The interwar period brought a power struggle as local Quakers asserted their right to manage the mission themselves. The final chapter briefly summarizes the evolution of the mission since 1914 and indicates how the pre-war developments laid the foundation for the conflict over leadership in the 1930s and 1940s.

## **Chapter 2: A Brief History of Quakerism**

The story of the evolution of Quakerism from a radical fringe theological movement in England to a mainstream American Protestant denomination spans roughly two centuries, from 1650 to 1850. This chapter introduces Quaker history, theology, and its early leaders. The goal is to acquaint readers with aspects of Quaker beliefs, practices, and history that are most relevant to their later involvement in Ramallah. Therefore, this chapter emphasizes the evolution of church structure and the role of evangelism, education and women.<sup>44</sup>

### **Beginnings: Early Beliefs and Organization**

Quakerism has its roots in the religious and political turmoil in England during the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. A century earlier the Anglican church had broken with the Roman Catholic Church because of a political dispute between the pope and King Henry VIII. The religious landscape remained in flux at both the popular and ruling levels. The young King Edward VI, only nine when he ascended to the throne, continued Henry VIII's assaults on clerical authority. Queen Mary briefly restored Roman Catholicism in the 1550s, and then Protestantism was reinstated under Queen Elizabeth, who died in 1604. Two decades later, King Charles I caused a commotion by marrying a Catholic woman. Charles also actively persecuted Puritans, who had coexisted with Anglicans under Elizabeth's rule. Charles' reign continued in controversy; he faced religious dissent, a rebellion in Scotland, and an uncooperative parliament. In dire need of tax revenue that only the gentry could collect, Charles convened a hostile parliament in 1640. Unable to reach an effective compromise on the balance of power between the king and the parliament, civil war broke out in 1642 and continued until 1651.

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<sup>44</sup> For a more complete discussion of the evolution of Quaker theology and structure, see Dandelion, 2007.

Into this tumultuous landscape stepped George Fox, a young itinerant preacher. Born in 1624 in Leicestershire, a Puritan town, Fox began his theological questioning at a young age. When established priests could not satisfy his challenges to church doctrine, he sought out some of the many religious dissenters who had begun preaching around this time, spurred by the availability of the Bible in English, the development of the printing press, and the turmoil caused by political and religious uncertainty.<sup>45</sup> Even among dissenting priests and scholars, Fox found that “none among them all could speak to [his] condition.” Spiritually alone, having left his family and lost his faith in humanity, Fox “heard a voice which said, ‘There is one [Jesus Christ] that can speak to thy condition.’” As he later recorded in his journal, Fox says that receiving this revelation from God his “desires after the Lord grew stronger, and zeal in the pure knowledge of God, and of Christ alone, without the help of any man, book, or writing.”<sup>46</sup> His claim to direct and immediate revelation was radical, and would eventually lead to the emergence of the movement later known as Quakerism.

Fox’s belief in direct communication with God, available to every individual, proved to be a foundation of Quaker theology and worship. Though he grounded his claims in Biblical references, Fox argued that God’s revelations to humankind did not stop centuries before. Instead, revelation was a continual process,<sup>47</sup> and therefore the vision granted to an English farmer in 1650 was just as valid as the vision granted to St. Paul. The format of Quaker worship followed directly from this principle. Quakers sit in silence, waiting for the spirit of God to move one of their group to preach. “The silence was intense, for it was living and dynamic, and they believed that there in the hush, in their humble group, the great God of the Universe was preparing a mouthpiece for His word, and that when the seal of silence was broken and utterance

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<sup>45</sup> Dandelion, 4.

<sup>46</sup> George Fox, *The journal of George Fox* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1962), 8-9.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., xiii.



should come, it would be the *prophetic word of the Lord*.”<sup>48</sup> Meetings for worship were a great equalizer as women, and even children, were able to speak. The early Quakers rejected sacraments, music, images, ritual, and all other outward forms of religious devotion<sup>49</sup> as distractions and false symbols of what truly mattered – internal spiritual growth and belief.

After beginning to preach publicly in 1652, Fox quickly gained a large following. Hundreds, sometimes thousands of people regularly came to hear him as he traveled through England. He found a receptive audience among the seekers, a loosely organized religious group whose members believed in individual revelation. Elizabeth Hooten was one of the first to join Fox and soon became a leading preacher, establishing a primary role for women in the movement early on.<sup>50</sup> By 1660, there may have been as many as 50,000 people following Fox in England.<sup>51</sup> Margaret Fell, a wealthy landowner, was another early convert. Fell provided support to the movement and became one of its most influential leaders, marrying Fox after her first husband passed away.<sup>52</sup>

Despite several prominent supporters, early Quakers frequently aroused the ire of local authorities and residents who periodically drove them out of town or threw them in jail. Local persecution often escalated to the national level. Joseph Nayler, viewed as the co-leader of the movement and a rival to Fox, was branded, beaten, and had his tongue bored after Parliament found him guilty of blasphemy.<sup>53</sup>

Fox and his followers aroused such anger by threatening social and political norms and contesting religious hierarchies.<sup>54</sup> Quakers challenged the established order of local churches by

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<sup>48</sup> Rufus Jones, *The Quakers in the American Colonies* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1911) 137.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Hamm, *Quakers in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 21.

<sup>50</sup> Christina Jones, *American Friends in World Missions* (Richmond: Brethren Publication House, 1946), 12.

<sup>51</sup> Hamm, 18.

<sup>52</sup> Dandelion, 18.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>54</sup> Hamm, 21.

calling on individuals to speak directly with God, without any intermediaries. They eschewed formal places of worship, rejected violence, denounced tithing and preaching for money, and recognized the ability of women to preach. They refused to take off their hats or use the word “you,” both common signs of respect, to anyone but God. These practices immediately identified them and set them apart in public life. Quakers also refused to swear oaths, believing that oaths called into question the truthfulness of all other statements. Honest people would speak the truth at all times, not merely when under oath. This particular practice was controversial after King Charles II was reinstated and used oaths of allegiance and supremacy to prove loyalty to his new regime. Women were prominent in the movement, making up about half of the early converts and missionaries.<sup>55</sup> Quakers also sometimes engaged in public behavior that was seen as bizarre or even crazy. For instance, Naylor’s blasphemy trial was sparked by a re-enactment of Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem, with Naylor himself acting as the Christ figure.<sup>56</sup> Even the name “Quaker” was originally a derogatory term that referred to their occasional practice of shaking or trembling during prayer.

Despite persecution, people continued to be inspired by the Quaker message and many became ‘convinced’ of ‘friendly’ values. As more people joined the movement, groups began to organize into local, monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings. These groupings, which included increasingly large geographical areas, decided matters of administration and business through a process of corporate consensus-building. There was no central authority and meetings could not impose decisions on others. Monthly and quarterly meetings were separated by sex and both

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<sup>55</sup> Dandelion, 37.

<sup>56</sup> Hamm, 20.

groups made decisions, granting women an amount of power within the organizational structure that was unparalleled at the time.<sup>57</sup>

Public demonstrations of controversial behavior became less common after 1660, as Quakerism became more organized and structured. Fox began this process by organizing Monthly Meetings, and a new generation of converts continued the trend by attempting to systematize Quaker theology. The first Quaker theological defense, Robert Barclay's *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, published in 1676, illustrates a movement towards standardization that was not evident in the first generation of believers.<sup>58</sup> One of the most influential new converts during this time was William Penn, who joined the movement in the 1660s and later began the great experiment in Quaker governance in what would become the commonwealth of Pennsylvania.<sup>59</sup> In 1703, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting took another step towards standardization by collecting and codifying many of George Fox's letters into a Book of Discipline. These guidelines addressed both theological and daily practice, such as "the theory of the meeting for worship, setting up the church machinery, giving directions as to the treatment of delinquents and of the poor, advice as to business, dress, and language, and a multitude of other details."<sup>60</sup>

While the controversial public demonstrations slowed down towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Quakers were still set apart from the rest of society by their choice of dress, speech, and manner. Quakers were instantly recognizable by their refusal to take off their hats to their social superiors, their manner of speech, and their simple dress. These practices may seem inconsequential, but they led to persecution and suffering. Quakers in England continued to be

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Dandelion, 51.

<sup>60</sup> R. Jones, 1911, 438.

violently persecuted until the Act of Toleration in 1689, after which they entered into a period of consolidation. Over the next 150 years, Quakers in England slowly gained full legal rights and won exemptions from government requirements that contradicted their religious beliefs. In 1722, English Quakers no longer had to swear oaths unless in criminal court. In 1762 they were granted exemptions from military service. In 1832, they could be elected to Parliament, and in 1870 they could serve as university professors.<sup>61</sup>

### **Early Quakerism in the New World**

Quakerism was a transatlantic movement from almost its earliest days. The American and British Quakers remained connected through correspondence and frequent visits.<sup>62</sup> American Quakers sought guidance from “advices” from England – tracts on the views of Quakerism’s founders that were read aloud during Meeting.<sup>63</sup> In spite of close connections with English Quakers, American Quakerism had a separate trajectory due to a different political climate. Some early American Quakers had opportunities for involvement in public life which were not available to British Quakers until centuries later. Although persecuted in Massachusetts and Virginia, Quakers were actively involved in the governments of Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and New Jersey. By the middle of the eighteenth century, American Quakers had established several prominent Meetings and were an accepted part of the religious fabric of the colonies. This public acceptance, however, was not immediate or universal.

The first two Quakers in the new world, two female missionaries who landed in Boston in 1656, were immediately sequestered in jail and prohibited from speaking with the inhabitants. These early arrivals were then sent back to Barbados, a common intermediate destination for Quakers bound for the colonies. Persecution continued in Puritan Massachusetts, which did not

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<sup>61</sup> Dandelion, 54.

<sup>62</sup> R. Jones, 1911, 139.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 145.

tolerate religious dissenters. The colony enacted fines against those who housed Quakers and arrested, whipped, and exiled prominent preachers.<sup>64</sup> The violence reached its peak in the famous execution of four Quakers, including a woman, Mary Dyer, between 1659 and 1661.<sup>65</sup> Dyer had been arrested upon her arrival in Massachusetts after converting to Quakerism in England during the 1650s. She was later banished from the colony, but she felt moved to return. In 1659, she and two other Quakers, William Robinson and Marmaduke Stephenson, were condemned to die. The two men were executed on October 27, but Dyer was granted a reprieve just before execution. In a dramatic late reversal, she was pulled down from the tree and spared with the noose already around her neck. According to her biographer, Dyer resented the reprieve because she believed it was granted only to quell popular disapproval of the hanging of the two men. Therefore she resolved to go back to Boston and force the authorities to either repeal the law or kill her.<sup>66</sup> On June 1, 1660, Dyer was hung on Boston Common. William Leddra was later hanged on March 14, 1661, the last of the four Quakers to be executed in Boston. Extreme punishments, such as whipping, ear cropping, and branding, continued through the 1670s.<sup>67</sup>

Massachusetts stood in stark contrast to Rhode Island, where Quakers and other religious dissenters were free to practice their faiths. In fact, many of the Quakers causing havoc in Massachusetts were based in Rhode Island. Quakers were prominent in the highest levels of colonial government throughout the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, and occupied important posts including Attorney-General, Treasurer-General, and Governor.<sup>68</sup> Meetings continued to grow, often fueled by powerful female preachers drawn to the mysticism of Quaker beliefs. The movement received

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>65</sup> Horatio Rogers, *Mary Dyer of Rhode Island: the Quaker martyr that was hanged on Boston common, June 1, 1660* (Providence: Preston and Rounds, 1896), 66.

<sup>66</sup> Rogers, 57.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 174.

another boon when George Fox visited the colonies in 1671 and convinced many more to join the movement.<sup>69</sup>

As Quakers joined colonial governments in the 1700s, they were in the center of controversies surrounding violence and war. As a body, Quakers rejected any form of violence, even in self-defense. In practice, Quakers' public positions forced compromises and circumventions; in Pennsylvania, for instance, Penn appointed deputies to handle using force in property claims.<sup>70</sup> Outright war, however, was a different matter. Their pacifism essentially forced Quakers out of government in Pennsylvania after they could not prevent the outbreak of violence between the settlers, the Native Americans, and the French.<sup>71</sup> Pacifism was often taken for passivity, though Quakers argued that "acquiescence in evil when the means were at hand to strike it down morally never was a part of their principles or practice....a careful student of Quaker political ethics will find them advocating not supine submission to wrong, but a resistance limited in its methods by the moral law alone."<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, during the American revolutionary war, the refusal to take up arms against the British was seen as loyalty to the colonial regime.

A century later, just a few years before Eli and Sybil left for the Ottoman Empire, the commitment to pacifism would test Quaker's belief in another core principle: the abolition of slavery. Quaker Meetings had a long history of opposing slavery, though it took several generations to move from George Fox's position that freeing slaves would be "very acceptable to the Lord"<sup>73</sup> to official prohibitions against purchasing slaves or encouraging further importation.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 426.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 478.

<sup>72</sup> Sharpless, "Government," in R. Jones, 1911, 463.

<sup>73</sup> Fox, quoted in R. Jones, 1911, 510.

Local, monthly, and yearly meetings adopted such regulations throughout the 1730s and 1740s.<sup>74</sup> Finally in the 1770s, meetings disowned all Quakers who would not free their slaves.<sup>75</sup> Quakers continued to be active in the abolition movement into the late 1800s, and meetings were often divided over whether or not fighting for the abolition of slavery was acceptable. In fact, one of the Joneses' sons fought and died for the Union during the Civil War and their meeting did not penalize him.<sup>76</sup> Moving from recognizing the evils of slavery to actually banning it took more than a century. Building consensus is slow work, making Quaker meetings conservative procedurally even as they espoused radical ideas.

The early history of Quakers in the colonies yields two conclusions that are relevant to their later involvement in the Middle East. First, Quakerism has always been a diffuse movement with limited hierarchical structures. Despite the rigidity of the Discipline, authority was never centralized in a person or office. Second, Quakers had widely different experiences of persecution and public life. There was not a unified American Quaker experience. Taken together, these two points highlight that while all Quakers share a background in certain experiences, beliefs, and practices, it was a highly individualist movement that included a diversity of opinions and approaches. Yet, until the 1820s, Quakerism remained a united theological movement. This would not remain the case for the rest of the century.

### **Schisms in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

Quakers' peculiar way of life and efforts to remain separate from the corrupting influences of general society isolated them. Despite some outreach efforts to Native Americans, the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were a period of internal community development, a phase emphasizing what is known as the 'quietist' approach in Quaker history. It had become apparent

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<sup>74</sup> R. Jones, 1911, 515.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 520.

<sup>76</sup> Rufus Jones, *Eli and Sybil Jones: Their Life and Work* (Philadelphia, PA: Henry T. Coates & Co., 1889), 171.

that the world was not going to unite under a new Quaker Christian belief. With Quakers largely excluded from public life because of their refusal to be party to violence and war, communities turned inwards. Though the movements' origins were evangelical and outward looking, the reliance on quiet waiting and gradual personal growth in worship facilitated this shift. This was in stark contrast to predominant Protestant denominations that emphasized conversion as a means to salvation and therefore focused their energies on converting new members.<sup>77</sup> Towards the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Quaker communities faced internal pressure to become more like mainstream Protestant churches, sparking theological divides that split the American Quaker establishment. These disagreements were mainly over the role of evangelism and the primacy of inward revelation.<sup>78</sup>

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was time of division for American Friends, as debates about both the substance and form of worship divided Quaker communities across the country. The first split occurred in the 1820s when Elias Hicks, an itinerant preacher from New York, clashed with the growing evangelist trend spreading from mainstream Protestant movements to Quaker Meetings. Hicks "did not admit the Bible as authoritative. Scripture led to superstition rather than authentic faith."<sup>79</sup> This view was bound to conflict with 'Orthodox' Quakers, also known as evangelists, who emphasized the Bible and pursued greater ties with other Protestant sects. The rift proved to be irreconcilable. New York, Philadelphia, Indiana, and Baltimore and Ohio Meetings all split into Hicksite and Orthodox camps, although New England Yearly Meeting, of which the Joneses were members, remained united and Orthodox.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Hamm, 6.

<sup>78</sup> Dandelion, 7.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 92.



Orthodox Quakers divided again by 1860 over the issue of closer ties with other Protestants. Gurneyites, who followed the British preacher Joseph John Gurney, advocated working with other evangelical Protestants to advance social causes and believed that the first two generations of Quakers were incorrect in asserting the primacy of inner light over Biblical revelation.<sup>81</sup> Followers of John Wilbur, a New England preacher who rejected Gurney's point of view, saw this approach as a threat to the very foundations of Quaker belief. Other divisions and reconciliations have occurred since the initial unity was shaken, resulting in a diverse set of structures and practices within American Quakerism. These splits reflected the greater struggle within Quakerism between engaging with the larger 'world' or isolating themselves to stay pure from corrupting influences or, in Quaker terminology, 'spots of the world.' Missionaries clearly believed in a strategy of engagement, with both non-Christians and other Protestants, and these splits and the concurrent alignment with mainstream Protestant churches in worship style and social practices gave them an institutional foundation within Quakerism for their approach.

### **Missions to Native Americans**

Though the early part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was a time of consolidation and internal focus, Friends in the latter part of the century revived the missionary trend. Quakerism was an evangelical religion from its earliest days, when George Fox traveled through England, Europe, and the American colonies sharing his revelations. In his journal, dictated to his son-in-law some decades later, Fox describes his calling "to bring people off from all the world's religions, which are vain; that they might know the pure religion, might visit the fatherless, the widows, and the strangers, and keep themselves from the spots of the world."<sup>82</sup> Nineteenth century Friends built

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<sup>81</sup> Hamm, 47.

<sup>82</sup> Fox, 21.

on these sets of traditions as they participated in broader Christian movements to evangelize Native Americans and communities outside of the Anglo-American Protestant stronghold.

Friends had always included Native Americans and others of non-European descent in their evangelism. “The Friends, beginning with George Fox and William Penn, made many attempts to convert the Indians to Christianity.” Rufus Jones frequently references Quakers who traveled and occasionally preached to Native Americans during the early colonial days. For example, John Bowron visited the West Indies and Surinam from England and preached to the “mostly naked” natives about “the white man’s God.”<sup>83</sup> Jones described this as “the earliest piece of what we should now call Foreign Missionary work.”<sup>84</sup> The idea of a “universal divine light” was well received, but “Indian converts were practically non-existent.”<sup>85</sup> Early Quakers blamed the Native American for being unable to “accept” the proper religious and moral beliefs.

Quaker missionary activities towards Native Americans were limited to individual efforts until around 1800, when Meetings became involved in supporting and funding more permanent missions. Missions were becoming more institutionalized across the Protestant spectrum, as the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the most important organizational body for Protestant missions, was also founded at this time.<sup>86</sup> Beginning in 1869, the same year Sybil and Eli Jones arrived in Palestine, Friends were also intimately involved with implementing President Ulysses S. Grant’s policy towards Native Americans which designated land to be set aside for their use without interference.<sup>87</sup> As the Quaker historian Rayner Kelsey describes, Quaker efforts during the 19<sup>th</sup> century focused heavily on settling

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<sup>83</sup> Here Rufus Jones quotes from an older account of Bowron, *Piety Promoted: In a Collection of dying Sayings of Many of the People Called Quakers* (1854). *Piety Promoted* seems to have gone through at least nine printings and it is not entirely clear which Jones cites, though probably the first.

<sup>84</sup> R. Jones, 1911, 43.

<sup>85</sup> Sharpless, “Friends and the Indians,” in R. Jones, 1911, 498.

<sup>86</sup> Makdisi, 2008, 51.

<sup>87</sup> Kelsey, 14.

Native American communities, encouraging them to adopt agriculture and abandon hunting and raiding, and spreading Protestant practices and values.

Many of the practices and statements from Quakers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century regarding the Native Americans reflect a certain type of paternalist egalitarianism that was also prevalent in the foreign missions. For example, the Quaker and Superintendent for Indian Affairs Barclay White wrote in 1875:

The disposition and intention of all the tribes is good and tending towards the arts of civilization. With just treatment, the adults are easily controlled, and the children are apt scholars in most branches of school-learning. Were it possible for the Nebraska Indian to receive from his white neighbor the treatment and respect due to a man, and from the Government equal rights with the white man before the law, he would soon stand as his peer, and become as valuable a citizen.<sup>88</sup>

White's beliefs were both radical and damning for the Native Americans: they should be treated equally as long as they behave just like European Americans. His attitude both acknowledges the potential equality of individuals while denigrating Native cultures. As superintendent, White encouraged Native Americans to abandon their lifestyles and adopt agriculture and formal schooling. His policies were far more humane than others who advocated violence against Native Americans but no less threatening to their way of life.

Missions to Native Americans were important in this context because they were the immediate precursors to international missions further afield. Some of the same individuals, such as British Quaker Henry Stanley Newman, were active in both fields.<sup>89</sup> Newman later wrote a guide to missionaries based on his experiences in several mission fields.<sup>90</sup> Missions to Native communities also established the precedent that successful mission stations did not necessarily lead to a wave of conversions. Changes in education, agriculture, and domestic practices were all

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<sup>88</sup> Annual Reports of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, as quoted in Kelsey, 195.

<sup>89</sup> Kelsey, 209.

<sup>90</sup> Henry Stanley Newman, *Foreign Missions Reviewed; with Suggestions for the Formation of a Friends' Missionary Society* (London: A.W. Bennett, 1865).

considered grounds for celebration of the policies towards Native Americans. In effect, the Quakers were cultural missionaries as much as religious missionaries. This important aspect of Quaker missionary work would hold true in mission stations outside of the United States as well.

### **International Missions**

Eli and Sybil's decision to take their interpretation of faith across the Atlantic Ocean was firmly rooted in both Quaker tradition and the evangelical trend sweeping American Protestantism. The early 19<sup>th</sup> century brought renewed religious fervor to the young United States and a growing belief that Americans could bring the light of Protestant Christian faith to nonbelievers all over the world. New universities and organizations, such as the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, were formed to prepare and support Christian missionaries at home and abroad.<sup>91</sup> Quakers were influenced by the general milieu but also by individual leaders from other denominations; Sybil Jones acknowledged a Methodist minister as an important figure in her spiritual development, while many other notable Quaker figures of the time were in fact originally members of other congregations.<sup>92</sup>

Individual Quakers traveled to several countries in the 1850s and 1860s. Without any institutional support, these individuals made relatively short trips to several countries where permanent missionaries from other denominations usually hosted them. Sybil was probably the first American Quaker to feel called to go on a foreign mission, and she and Eli sailed for Liberia in 1851. In the next two decades, two Quakers from Indiana visited the Sandwich Islands and two others joined British Quakers working in India. These efforts remained scattered and were hampered by the divisions within Quakerism towards evangelism and proselytism. Many Orthodox Quakers opposed outward efforts towards conversion and "feared proselytism, which

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<sup>91</sup> C. Jones, 1946, 23.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

seemed to them basic in the missionary enterprise.”<sup>93</sup> Even though the ABCFM had been established almost sixty years earlier, not until 1870 did the evangelical movement within Quakerism lead to the establishment of a Foreign Missionary Society in the Indiana Yearly Meeting, and a central committee for foreign missions did not meet until 1894.<sup>94</sup> By this point, American Quakers had active missions not only in Palestine but also in Mexico and China. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, American Quakers began work in Kenya and founded what would become the largest community of Quakers in the world. British Quakers, who had established a Friends Foreign Mission Association (FFMA) in 1868, were active in India, Madagascar, Lebanon, China, South Africa, and carried out relief efforts in France and Russia.<sup>95</sup>

Quakers in foreign posts maintained contact with each other and home meetings through correspondence, but their activities were not coordinated. The overseeing committees had limited funding and a small mandate. In fact, the American Friends Board of Foreign Missions, which grew out of the committee that met in 1894, did not meet again for almost a decade. Local mission boards were wary of relinquishing control to a national body,<sup>96</sup> so foreign missions remained fragmented with only informal coordination.

### **Quaker Education**

Focusing on primary education was common to Protestant foreign missions, but it was also consistent with Quaker tradition. Quakers had a strong history of promoting primary education, even while forgoing developing strong institutions of advanced learning. They had no major universities to rival Harvard and Yale, both Puritan; the well-known Quaker colleges such as Haverford and Earlham were not founded until well into the 19th century. Rufus Jones argued

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<sup>93</sup> C. Jones, 1946, 29.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 31, 44.

<sup>95</sup> Edward Miligan, *The Past is Prologue: 100 Years of Quaker Overseas Work* (London: Friends Service Council, 1968).

<sup>96</sup> C. Jones, 45.

that, “their failure to appreciate the importance of the fullest expansion of human personality by education is the primary cause of their larger failure to win the commanding place in American civilization of which their early history gave promise.”<sup>97</sup> These developments can be traced to Fox’s disdain for higher education as an indicator of piety. In fact, “one of George Fox’s favorite dicta was that a degree from Oxford or Cambridge did not make a minister. The result was an anti-intellectualism that made Friends lag far behind other denominations in the development of higher education even while they were leaders in primary education.”<sup>98</sup> As we will see, Quakers excelled at founding primary and secondary schools in the Middle East but left the establishment of major universities, including the American universities in Cairo and Beirut, to other denominations.

### **Eli and Sybil Jones**

The Joneses were both typical of their time period and exceptional individuals. Their decision to travel to the holy land was by no means unique, but the combination of Sybil’s talent for preaching and Eli’s fundraising skills, along with their Quaker heritage, shaped the structure of the early mission. Eli and Sybil both came from Quaker families. Eli grew up in South China, Maine, where he and Sybil would later raise their family. According to his nephew Rufus Jones, who wrote a biography of his aunt and uncle, Eli faced constant economic hardship in his early life. The Bible was one of the few books available, and he had little opportunity for formal education. Sybil, however, was a schoolteacher until her marriage in 1833.<sup>99</sup>

Following in the footsteps of earlier female preachers, Sybil began her career as a traveling preacher in 1840 when she was ‘liberated’ by her meeting to travel and preach in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Eli’s supporting role is clear in Rufus Jones’ description: “In this

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<sup>97</sup> R. Jones, 1911, xxvi.

<sup>98</sup> Hamm, 8.

<sup>99</sup> R. Jones, 1889, 31.

work she was attended by her husband.”<sup>100</sup> In 1845, the couple visited most of the Quaker meetings in the United States even as yearly meetings were dividing over Gurneyism. Shortly afterwards, Sybil initiated a missionary trip to Africa, despite her poor health, five children, and the recent deaths of her father and brother. Through her diary and her nephew’s account of her life, it is apparent that it was important to convey that missionaries did not act of a sense of individual arrogance but felt compelled by a calling from above. “So deep was my sense of frailty and entire inability to do the work that I could not believe that the Master would select me go to on such an important embassy, a service of such vast moment.”<sup>101</sup>

Over the next two decades, the Jones preached across the United States and Canada, in Africa, Britain, and continental Europe. They visited other Quakers and sympathetic Baptists and Congregationalists. They spoke with prisoners and soldiers in churches, hotels, and barns.<sup>102</sup> They distributed religious literature and held meetings for worship. These trips were too short to convert many people or spread Quaker institutions. Instead, they functioned as ways to share information with other Quakers and try to inspire non-Quakers to infuse Friendly values into their lives.<sup>103</sup> The Joneses carried this approach into their work in Ramallah, choosing not to stay in the town or immediately send permanent Quaker missionaries. Nevertheless, the name and the spirit of the Joneses provided a framework for the early activities of the mission, which were largely determined by local Arabs.

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<sup>100</sup> R. Jones, 1889, 40.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 157.

### Chapter 3: Ramallah in Context

The Ramallah that welcomed Eli and Sybil Jones was far different from the bustling diplomatic center it is today. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Ramallah was a small, agricultural town in the hills around Jerusalem. The area was dotted with small family villages that paid taxes together, built houses collectively, assisted each other during the harvest, and provided mutual defense.<sup>104</sup> Peasants, who made up about 80 percent of the population,<sup>105</sup> tilled small plots of grains, olives, cotton, fruits, and vegetables and produced soap and wool for export.<sup>106</sup> As Doumani picturesquely describes, “fields were sown with grains, legumes, and vegetables; hills were terraced and planted with trees; and higher-up stony land was used for grazing. Until the last decades of Ottoman rule, most peasants were small landholders concentrated in the interior hill regions where horticulture, especially the tending of olive groves, was a way of life.”<sup>107</sup> Large-scale agriculture did not develop because the varied terrain prevented the accumulation of large tracts of land, and the availability of rainwater eliminated the need for large centralized irrigation systems.

Some of these familiar ways of life were transformed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by changes in the relationships among Palestine, Europe, and Istanbul. The 1800s were a turbulent time for the Ottoman central government, known as the Sublime Porte. As the Porte attempted to extend military and fiscal control in its provinces, European nations threatened the Empire territorially and economically. Lebanon and Palestine, among other areas, increasingly provided raw materials for export to Europe and European consuls exerted more and more influence. European

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<sup>104</sup> Doumani, 29.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>106</sup> Schölch, 80.

<sup>107</sup> Doumani, 27.



cultural and linguistic penetration was another threat, as certain communities within the Empire developed close ties with foreign governments.

The complex and changing relationship between the Ottoman central government, European representatives, and Arab leaders created a context in which missionaries were both welcomed and resented. This chapter outlines some of the major developments in these relationships to establish how they affected the political and religious environment in Ramallah when the Quakers arrived. I focus on the status of non-Muslim Ottomans, as well as the history of Christian communities in the Empire and European and American interests in Palestine and Syria. These political and economic interests are closely tied to the history of Christian missionaries in Ottoman territories. Finally, I return to Ramallah to look at missionary activity in the town before the Quakers arrived.

### **Ramallah in the Ottoman Empire**

It has been common to portray Ottoman rule over Palestine as oppressive and economically ruinous. In a rare confluence of interests, this narrative found currency with Arab nationalists, Zionists, and missionaries. Arab nationalists emphasized the negative aspects of Turkish domination while Zionists minimized the existing economic and political structures. Missionaries could point to the denigration of local culture as a call for renewal from the West. Reality, of course, was far more complicated. The central government exerted varying degrees of control over people and economic resources, with local leaders playing a much larger role in most peasants' day-to-day interactions.

In addition to the city and the surrounding villages, the *sancak* of Jerusalem included Hebron, Jaffa, and Gaza. Uniquely, this area was not part of a larger Ottoman administrative

unit.<sup>108</sup> To the north of Ramallah was the *sancak* of Nablus, technically aligned with the *vilaya* of Damascus until 1850, then briefly with Sidon, then finally with Beirut in the late 1880s. Nablus included some of the outer hills at the edge of Ramallah and el Bireh,<sup>109</sup> an adjacent Muslim village where the Quakers established a school. Of the major urban centers, Ramallah was closest to Jerusalem geographically and about equidistant from Jaffa, a port city, and Nablus, the most important inland city and the “center for regional trade and local manufacture.”<sup>110</sup> Despite the unique nature of Jerusalem and the religious differences between Nablus and Ramallah, the former being almost entirely Sunni Muslim while the latter was entirely Christian, a look at the social, economic, and political developments in these two cities and their surrounding areas provides insight into the situation in Ramallah.

Palestinian villages had a limited relationship with the central Ottoman government in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century because of the difficulty of controlling the rough terrain and the minimal benefits of doing so. Population and production were small, and no permanent Ottoman troops were garrisoned there to oversee them. Instead, “power was shared by a number of territorially based rural and urban families, each of which controlled a section of the hinterland and was capable of mobilizing a peasant militia.”<sup>111</sup> Around Jerusalem, powerful families maintained patronage relationships with villages and extracted tribute from Christian communities for protection and representation.<sup>112</sup> Agricultural areas like Palestine had little political influence. If

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<sup>108</sup> It is worth noting that there was no unified political unit under the Ottomans known as Palestine. The British Mandate period marked the first historical moment when there was a cohesive geographic political area known as Palestine, though the name had been used before in both Arabic and English to refer to the area. In this thesis, “Palestine” is used to refer to the territory under the British Mandate. Though there is an ongoing debate about the use of the term, there is no doubt that Ramallah and the surrounding areas would have been considered part of Palestine before, during, and after the Mandate. For a summary discussion of ‘Palestine’ and its borders at the end of the Ottoman Empire, see Schölch, 9-17.

<sup>109</sup> Doumani, 30.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>112</sup> Schölch, 229.

Nablus was, as Doumani says, “a periphery’s periphery,”<sup>113</sup> Ramallah could be considered the periphery of the periphery’s periphery.

This relationship began to change in the 1830s when Mehmet Ali’s Egypt seized control of Palestine and Syria, imposing a head tax and expanding peasant conscription while violently suppressing revolts.<sup>114</sup> Under the leadership of Mehmet Ali’s son, Ibrahim Pasha, villages and local leaders were no longer overseen by a distant central government demanding tax revenue but an occupying force that was very much present. When the Egyptian forces eventually withdrew, local leaders still exerted great power even as the scope of affairs of the central government increased.<sup>115</sup>

For the remainder of the century, the Porte enacted several policies to expand its ability to extract tax revenue and military conscripts from its provinces, usually at the expense of local power networks. The first of these acts, the *Hatt-ı Şerif* 1839, ushered in a period of reform known as the *Tanzimat*, the Arabic and Turkish word for ‘order.’ From the outset, the meaning of the Tanzimat was debated both within and outside the Empire. “Even as Ottoman officials described the obviously new laws and rights as arising out of (as opposed to contradicting) an Islamic Ottoman tradition, European powers viewed the Tanzimat as a mandate for intervention on behalf of the empire’s non-Muslim subject.”<sup>116</sup> It reflected a growing move towards greater equality within the existing framework of religious co-existence, and began to re-define the relationship between the Sultan and his subjects. For our purposes, the most relevant section of the decree related to the growing equality of Christian subjects under the law. The edict established *de jure* equality before the law between Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Ottoman

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<sup>113</sup> Doumani, 3.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>116</sup> Makdisi, 2008, 57.

subjects and liberalized restrictions on travel and trade.<sup>117</sup> However, the reform could be interpreted many ways and implementation depended on the interpretation of local officials.

Despite these legal reforms, the *Hatt-ı Şerif* did not usher in a wave of change. Central control continued to be weak in Palestine through the 1840s and 1850s. Local opposition to the reforms was strong; armed revolts against conscription spread across rural Syria in the early 1850s. Some Christian leaders opposed the reforms as well, since greater equality would diminish their power over their constituents.<sup>118</sup> Syrian notable families retained their control of the cities and hinterlands until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>119</sup> continuing existing patterns of tax collection. “Ottoman administrators...neither set out to nor could impose a uniform set of policies, at least not until the 1860s. Rather, different and sometimes contradictory fiscal and administrative arrangements were introduced over the centuries, and they often coexisted and overlapped for long periods of time.”<sup>120</sup> Nablus, and perhaps the rest of Palestine, benefited from these tenuous connections to Istanbul because it meant that most of the tax revenues were re-invested locally.<sup>121</sup> Some of the tax revenue still went to Istanbul, however, and much of what stayed local was invested in cities. As a result, the countryside did not see much reinvestment of its taxes into its villages.<sup>122</sup>

Economic relationships began to change as Palestinian villages became more integrated into European markets, particularly after the Crimean War in the mid-1850s, which pitted the Russian Empire against the Ottomans, French and British. Regional and local trade through Nablus increased as Europe sought raw materials for its factories, particularly cotton for France.

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>118</sup> Roderic Davison, “Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century,” in Albert Hourani et al, eds. *The Modern Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993): 61 – 82, 69.

<sup>119</sup> Albert Hourani, “Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables,” in Albert Hourani et al, eds. *The Modern Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993): 83 – 110, 104.

<sup>120</sup> Doumani, 5.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>122</sup> Schölch, 260.

These factors led to the “proliferation of a money economy and credit relations, as well as commoditization of land in the countryside”<sup>123</sup> By the mid-1800s there was enough economic differentiation among peasants in Nablus that some families lent money to others, bought land, and served as middlemen with urban merchants.<sup>124</sup>

As these economic shifts were taking place, both European consuls and Ottoman officials campaigned for greater influence in Palestinian cities. Across greater Syria, foreign consuls began to replace the urban notables as intermediaries with the central government in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Since the consuls usually intervened on behalf of their Christian and Jewish clients, this exacerbated opposition from local Muslims.<sup>125</sup> At the same time, Ottoman officials tried to limit the power of urban notables by strengthening the direct relationships between individual subjects and the state.<sup>126</sup> The *Hatt-ı Hümayun* of 1856, though passed under pressure from France and Britain after the Crimean War, reinforced the measures in the *Hatt-ı Şerif* and produced some visible gains but did not reflect a radical break from past practice. In addition to attempting to change the nature of the relationship between subjects and the state, these proclamations and the Constitution of 1876 were intended, at least partially, to pre-empt European efforts to force the Empire to reform and to respond to internal pressures from Christian communities for greater autonomy.<sup>127</sup> These affirmations of religious equality, and the growing benefits accruing to Christians through their association with foreign consuls, incensed many Muslims and failed to meet the aspirations of most Christians.

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<sup>123</sup> Doumani, 20.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>125</sup> Hourani, 1993, 107.

<sup>126</sup> Schölch, 287.

<sup>127</sup> Davison, 66-67.

## Christian Communities in Syria and Palestine

Though the majority of Ottoman subjects were Muslims, there were sizeable Jewish and Christian minority populations throughout the empire, including Orthodox and Catholic sects. Religion provided a legal and social identity for individuals in these communities. It was not a personal choice but a communal heritage. This conception of identity was entirely at odds with the personal, individualist approach of the Protestant missionaries who saw personal conversion, even at the expense of family and community, as the path to salvation.

Christian and Jewish communities in the Empire were officially recognized as *millets*, semiautonomous religious minorities that enjoyed the protection of the Sublime Porte and exemption from military service in return for obedience and a special tax (*cizye*). Each religious group had its own *millet* with its own leadership, family law, and tax obligations.<sup>128</sup> While Christians were legally penalized in several ways, tax extraction was a main way in which the central government interacted with villages in the hinterland and in that respect, the Ottomans did not discriminate between a Muslim piaster and a Christian one. Yet in the other primary mode of state-subject interaction – the military draft – Christians were at a distinct advantage being exempt from the long, grueling commitment that many Muslims took pains to avoid. Even after the *Hatt-ı Şerif* technically extended the obligation of military service to Christians, both Muslim and Christians preferred to continue the old system. Of course, viewed from another perspective, the exclusion from the military was simply one of many forms of official discrimination. Christians (and Jews) were required to wear special clothing, and their testimony was not accepted in a Muslim court of law. They frequently had difficulty getting permission to repair or build new churches, which required permission from the local Ottoman official, and

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 62.

converts to Christianity faced much more persecution than converts to Islam.<sup>129</sup> By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, these formal distinctions against Christians were countered by practical advantages conveyed by their association with foreign consuls.

Estimates of the number of Christian Arabs vary significantly based on the source. According to an estimate by the French consulate in Jerusalem, the district contained about 45,000 people in 1847 including 10,000 Christians (22%), 10,000 Jews (22%), and 25,000 Muslims (56%). A census taken in 1849 indicated that 32% of the male Ottoman subjects of Jerusalem (both city and countryside) were Christian, 53% Muslim, and 15% Jewish.<sup>130</sup> According to Ottoman census data, Christians made up about a quarter of all the residents of the Jerusalem *kaza* in 1905. This percentage held roughly constant throughout the surveys conducted in 1914 and 1922.<sup>131</sup> Of the Christians living in the Jerusalem area at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most were Greek Orthodox (about half or slightly more). Roman Catholics made up about a quarter of the population, and there was a sizable Armenian community. Small communities of Syrian Orthodox Christians, Coptic Christians, and Uniate Catholics also lived in the area. Protestants made up about 4% of the population in 1905 and 1914, and closer to 7.5% in 1922.<sup>132</sup> The discrepancies regarding the religious breakdown of the population and how it changed over time are important, but we need not resolve them here to have a general idea of the religious make up of the area. The city of Jerusalem was religiously heterogeneous, while villages were more homogenous. Most Christians lived in cities and in villages surrounding Jerusalem and in the Galilee, and Ramallah was exclusively Christian until the early 1900s.

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<sup>129</sup> Davison, 62.

<sup>130</sup> Schölch, 30.

<sup>131</sup> U.O. Schmeltz, "Population Characteristics of Jerusalem and Hebron regions according to Ottoman census of 1905," in Gad Gilbar, ed. *Ottoman Palestine* (Leiden: E.J. Brill:1990, 15 – 69), 26.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

Though religion was only one potential fault line within the heterogeneous region, religious divisions were quite visible in the conflicts that broke out in Lebanon and Syria in the 1850s. Violence on Mount Lebanon between and among Christians and Druze was followed by the infamous attacks in Damascus in 1860, in which Muslim rioters killed thousands of Christians. There is no simple explanation for why these clashes occurred, and various explanations have highlighted international economic factors<sup>133</sup> or internal conflicts. Contemporary Europeans generally viewed the violence as an “indication of the primordial passions of the local inhabitants,”<sup>134</sup> an irrational outbreak of Muslim hatred against beleaguered Christians. In a slight variation of this interpretation, some of the missionaries (including Ellen Clare Pearson, traveling companion to Eli and Sybil Jones) found common cause with the Druze who had indicated some interest in converting to Protestantism. As Pearson (previously Miller) describes, “The arrogance of the Maronites, whose bishops threatened the Druses with extermination, roused that fierce people, who, making common cause with the Moslems, rose against all the Christian sects in Lebanon and Damascus, attempting to exterminate them.”<sup>135</sup> The Damascus riots, as well as violence in Aleppo in 1850 and Nablus in 1856, was quite publicized and must have generated apprehension among Christians and missionaries as to the level of protection they could expect from local notables or Ottoman forces.

Events in Damascus did not spill over into Palestine, but the violence did have a profound influence on the mindset of Christians and Europeans.<sup>136</sup> There were also some limited incidents in Palestine. For instance, in 1881 Muslims attacked a monastery in Ramle, a town to the west of

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<sup>133</sup> Bruce Masters, “The 1850 Events in Aleppo: An Aftershock of Syria's Incorporation into the Capitalist World System,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 22 (No.1, February 1990): 3-20.

<sup>134</sup> Makdisi, 2000, 5.

<sup>135</sup> Ellen Clare Pearson, *Eastern Sketches: Notes of Scenery, Schools and Tent Life in Syria and Palestine* (Edinburgh: William Oliphant and Company, 1871), 32.

<sup>136</sup> Schölch, 274.



Jerusalem, for building a new gate even though they had obtained Ottoman permission for the addition. Building and repairing churches were frequent issues for missionaries that would trouble Quakers as well. Even with these isolated incidents, however, “the long tradition of religious ‘live and let live,’ even in the Palestinian cities, was by no means shaken. Socio-religious coexistence in a small land on which the attention of members of three world religions was focused was also a necessity of life.”<sup>137</sup>

### **European and American Interests in the Ottoman Empire**

By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, European powers were primarily interested in preserving the Ottoman Empire while maximizing their sphere of influence. No country wanted to risk the war that would likely result from the breakup of the Empire, but at the same time their scheming and encroachment contributed to the weakness of the Sublime Porte. Religious institutions were a primary way for Europeans to gain power. France supported Maronites in Lebanon and Roman Catholics, while the Russian Empire intervened on behalf of the Greek Orthodox and Armenians. The British and Prussians needed an avenue to gain influence in the Empire, so they looked to increase the importance of Protestant communities. England also became the special protector of the Jews.<sup>138</sup>

The United States was initially interested in economic relations with the Ottoman Empire and was largely separate from the power plays among European countries. Trade with the new United States began in the very early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the Ottoman-American Treaty of Trade and Navigation established diplomatic relations in 1830. Maintaining good relations with the Sublime Porte in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was important to the United States for shipping and

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<sup>137</sup> Schölch, 277.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 50.

commercial reasons.<sup>139</sup> Though there was a crisis in bilateral relations when two Americans participated in an armed revolt in Syria in the 1860s and numerous disputes over the treatment of Jews in Jerusalem,<sup>140</sup> Americans were not intimately involved with domestic Ottoman affairs like their European counterparts.

Before the treaty in 1830, American missionaries related to the Sublime Porte through British representatives and therefore occupied a powerful position *vis a vis* the central government. Specifically, missionaries had no trouble obtaining travel permits.<sup>141</sup> Even after 1830, American missionaries tried to work closely with British ones to maintain their privileges. This created problems, however, when Americans aligned themselves with British colonial interests against communities supported by the French. Farah describes how this contributed to an armed conflict between the Druze, who allowed the American missionaries to operate in Christian villages in their territory, and the Maronites.<sup>142</sup>

Religious missionaries went hand in hand with government interests, although both were constrained by the limits of the other. Religious outreach could only go so far in promoting government positions and missionaries were constrained by their government's foreign policies. Most European countries developed a strategy of limited intervention designed to preserve the Empire while exercising a check on their rivals. This meant protecting their religious minorities while maintaining a commercial presence without overly antagonizing the Porte. American interests were somewhat different because of the United States' minimal interest in interfering in domestic Ottoman affairs.

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<sup>139</sup> Çagri Erhan, "Main Trends in Ottoman-American Relations," in Aydin, Mustafa and Erhan, Çagri, eds, *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present, and Future* (London: Routledge, 2004), 9.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>142</sup> Caesar Farah, "Protestantism and Politics" in David Kushner, ed. *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political Social and Economic Transformation* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Press, 1984), 320 – 341.

## **‘The Peaceful Crusade’: Protestant Missionaries in the Holy Land**

From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, European Christians from both Catholic and Protestant denominations looked to Palestine as both a field ripe for conversions and an important part of their own religious history. Establishing a presence in Christian holy sites was religiously significant and increasingly politically possible as European influence grew in the Ottoman Empire. The earliest Protestant missions were to the Jewish population in Jerusalem, and there was significant interest in working with Muslims. Missionaries in the field, however, quickly realized that evangelizing these communities was largely impossible and they focused most of their efforts on Arab Christians. The effort began with individual travelers and developed into a network of schools, universities, hospitals, and printing presses with significant political, educational, and social influence.

The first Protestant missionaries to greater Syria in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were Jewish converts affiliated with the London Jews Society.<sup>143</sup> These short visits were quickly followed by the arrival of two American missionaries in 1820, Levi Parsons and Pliny Fisk, sponsored by the new American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). Despite few tangible results of Parsons’ and Fisk’s initial travels, the ABCFM sent reinforcements who soon established a base in Malta and visited Greece, Jerusalem, and Lebanon. Orthodox Christian leaders welcomed these early missionaries as visitors, but tension quickly arose when the foreigners began more permanent outreach projects.<sup>144</sup> Fisk and another missionary were arrested in 1824 for distributing Arabic Bibles in Jerusalem, although the Ottoman official released them with the caveat that they limit their activities to other Christians.<sup>145</sup> In general, however, Ottoman officials were not the main obstacle to missionary activities. The Porte did not significantly

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<sup>143</sup> A.L. Tibawi, *British Interests in Palestine 1800 – 1901* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 8.

<sup>144</sup> Tibawi, 1966, 23.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

suppress missionaries until they became a threat by encouraging nationalist movements among the Armenians and Bulgarians in the 1870s. Local Christian leaders strongly opposed missionary activity, however, since it directly threatened their religious and political power.

Beirut became the first permanent mission station for the Protestants, despite local opposition, because it was impossible for foreigners to reside permanently in Jerusalem. The Beirut mission carried out “preaching in private, distribution of Bibles and tracts, opening of schools, and publishing polemics.”<sup>146</sup> There were a few conversions, mostly among individuals who were out of favor with their original churches and had taken up employment with the mission as translators or teachers. As‘ad Shidyaq, an early convert from the Maronite church, was imprisoned in a monastery where he was tortured and eventually died in 1830.<sup>147</sup> The foreigner Protestants were not exempt from threats of violence. The small band of missionaries barely left their homes for several months out of fear.<sup>148</sup> Their difficulties and failures indicate how little power missionaries held in the early years. They had originally planned to reach out to Muslims, Jews, and Christians but were almost immediately limited to Orthodox Christian communities because of political realities.

In the 1820s and ‘30s, Protestant missions in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine were little more than a few individuals working alone to spread their faith through small, short-term projects. During the first ten years of the mission, the number of converts to Protestantism reached a grand total of eight. Missionaries began to open schools in and around Beirut, but they were informal and hardly a threat to existing schools under the care of Maronites and other

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<sup>146</sup> Tibawi, 1966, 37.

<sup>147</sup> Makdisi, 2008, 2.

<sup>148</sup> Tibawi, 1966, 43.

denominations. Nevertheless, from the beginning, the Greek Orthodox Bishop of Beirut threatened to excommunicate parents who sent their children to American schools.<sup>149</sup>

The late 1830s and early 1840s brought limited expansion. Missionaries were eventually able to establish permanent residences in Jerusalem. Mehmet Ali's conquest of Palestine in the 1830s made missionary activity somewhat easier, and the number of schools increased. The Protestant-owned press began sporadically printing Arabic books on religion and language in the 1830s.<sup>150</sup> While the Beirut mission remained larger and more influential, the Jerusalem station had requests from Bethlehem, Gaza, Ramle, Jaffa, and Nazareth for new schools.<sup>151</sup> Still, the number of conversions was insignificant and opposition from local churches remained high. The ABCFM insisted on reorganizing the mission and re-focusing on preaching at the expense of education and printing.<sup>152</sup> Jerusalem was abandoned to the British, while the Americans focused on Lebanon. All missionaries were finally required to learn Arabic well enough to preach in it (though this requirement was later dropped), and they were exhorted to encourage revival within Orthodox churches rather than encourage animosity by creating Arab Protestant congregations.

Early missionaries struggled with several issues concerning the desired outcomes of their mission that would challenge Quakers several decades later as well. Was their goal to create Protestant Arabs or to spark a religious reformation that would internally reform Orthodox churches? What was the role of American culture and language in promoting religious change? In a marked contrast with some later missions, and particularly the Quaker projects in Ramallah, missionary schools under the ABCFM in the 1840s taught primarily in Arabic and

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 63 – 65.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 105.

“discouraged[d] any departure from local manners and customs in dress, food, or dormitory.”<sup>153</sup>

The missionaries themselves recognized that associating with foreigners outside the mission was corrupting the morals of their students and sought to isolate them from foreign culture while infusing new religious values.

By 1869 when the Quakers joined the missionary scene, Protestant missionary schools were common, although the number of converts was still fairly low. Members of Orthodox Christian communities sought out affiliation with the foreigners as their consuls became more influential, even as very few adopted a new religious identity. Foreign languages became more useful commercially, giving new importance to missionary schools. With the creation of Protestant *millet* in 1850 (after significant pressure from the British ambassador in Istanbul), conversion no longer implied renouncing one's legal identity in the Empire. Competition between various sects spurred new institutions. Often when a Catholic organization opened a school in a village, a Protestant school would soon follow and vice versa. Presbyterians and Jesuits were the main competitors for converts and influence. More missionaries arrived in the 1850s, and local Protestant churches opened in several cities in Syria.<sup>154</sup> By 1860, there were 33 Presbyterian schools alone in Jerusalem and Lebanon, and the Syrian Protestant College (later the American University in Beirut) opened its doors in 1866. Local Christian leaders could no longer oppose missionaries and their converts as violently as the early Maronite church leadership did to Shidyah.

### **Missionaries in Ramallah**

The earliest missionaries did not reach Ramallah, probably because foreigners could not establish a permanent base in near-by Jerusalem until the more permissive period of Egyptian

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 131.

rule in the 1830s. Significant missionary institutions were not established until the 1850s. George Whiting, one of the first Protestant missionaries to settle in Jerusalem for more than a short visit,<sup>155</sup> did make a few efforts to establish a school there in the 1830s. Whiting's journal entry on his initial visit paints a quaint picture:

We took a seat under a tree, and a large company of men and boys collected around us... One of the [Greek Orthodox] priests of the village joined the company, looked at the books, and expressed great satisfaction in the distribution of them among the people. With this priest I had much conversation, and before we left made a conditional engagement with him to open a school in the village at my expense. He seemed entirely willing to engage in this work, and pronounced it a noble charity in us to promote it.<sup>156</sup>

The school never opened, however, because of opposition from the Greek Orthodox patriarch.

The hopes we had cherished of having schools established at Beit Jalah, Ramallah, and other places, have been blown away. Various difficulties are thrown in the way, whenever the subject is mentioned to our friends in those villages, but we apprehend that the grand difficulty is in the Greek convent in Jerusalem. As long as their opposition to the undertaking and their power remain the same as at present, we see not how it can be brought about.<sup>157</sup>

The 'power' of the Orthodox Church did not remain the same, however, and its ability to prevent missionaries from proselytizing among its adherents decreased. In 1850 Samuel Gobat, the second Protestant Bishop of Jerusalem and an active missionary, was able to open a boys' school in Ramallah. A Roman Catholic school for boys followed in 1857 and led to a few conversions.<sup>158</sup>

When the Joneses arrived in 1869, missionary schools were not a new phenomenon, either in Ramallah or across Palestine. Some residents had been educated in mission schools in other cities. While opposition from local religious leaders continued, it had been established that many Arab Christians wanted to interact with foreigners, learn their languages, and potentially

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>156</sup> Missionary Herald, 3, 102.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>158</sup> Shaheen, 21.

adopt new forms of Christianity. By this point, foreign missionaries could be hindered, but not stopped, by opposition from the Orthodox Church hierarchy.



## Chapter 4: The Early Years

*We have a nice schoolroom & always send some one from here on Sundays to hold a service there. If we gave up the school we should have practically to give up the service there which would be a pity as it is the only regular meeting which is held there. In neither Beit Jalah or Jiffneh is there a girls school & in the former village they have often asked for one so we thought how would it be to open a girl's school in one of these villages.*

For the first two decades years of the Quaker presence in Palestine, day schools for boys and girls were the main project of the mission. These schools, for both Muslim and Christian children, gave Quakers a platform for their religious teachings by meeting a perceived need within the community. As Maude Hessenauer, the wife of the medical missionary stationed in Ramallah in the 1880s, indicates in her letter above, the schools opened the door for religious meetings that would otherwise have been difficult or impossible to hold.<sup>159</sup>

Until 1889, foreigners had a limited involvement in the management of day-to-day mission affairs. The opening of the first boarding school and the subsequent arrival of a small but steady flow of foreigners from the United States and England marked a significant change in the relations between foreign and local Quakers. Until the Training Home opened, however, the Hessenauers were the only Europeans among a staff of Arab Christians. Missionaries from other denominations usually followed a different model, remaining in Palestine or Lebanon for long periods of time and importing teachers from the United States or Europe. The Joneses, however, started schools where qualified local teachers could be found.<sup>160</sup>

The small number of foreigners is reflected in the missionary archive, where few sources document this time period. Only three published works address the first years of the mission

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<sup>159</sup> Maude Hessenauer, Ramallah, to Eli Jones, 8 May 1880, Jones Collection, Box 1 22O, Quaker Special Collection, Haverford College, Haverford, PA.

<sup>160</sup> Note that this was not a specifically Quaker policy, as the Quaker school in Brummana, Lebanon, followed a different pattern. There, the European founder of the school remained in Brummana with his family and directed the school. This reflects the decentralized and individualistic nature of Quaker missions.

with any detail. Ellen Clare Pearson's memoir and histories published decades later by Aneesa Ma'louf and Cristina Jones provide detailed and occasionally contradictory accounts of the Joneses' visit and the early years of the schools. A few official mission reports from the 1870s survive, as well as some personal letters to Eli Jones. Compared with later years, the records provide limited information about the daily operations of the schools and few insights into how decisions were made. The available information indicates, however, that the foreign Quakers maintained control over the general direction of the mission, major decisions, and financial resources. Within this framework of acceptable projects and behaviors, however, Palestinians created the institutions and practices that came to define the mission.

### **Initial Encounters**

By the time that the Joneses' traveling party reached Jerusalem, they had already passed through Greece, Syria, and Lebanon and formed their early impressions of the region and its inhabitants. While still on the ship, Pearson describes meeting one of the first Orthodox Christian women they encountered, a young bride to be on her way to her wedding. Pearson describes friendly interactions on their ship and a sad parting when the girl disembarked. In her words, "It would not be easy to forget Miriam, the first Eastern woman whose acquaintance we made – a type of the many whom we afterwards met, warm and open hearted towards their sisters from the West, and longing after something better, which they think we have it in our power to give."<sup>161</sup> Her description exemplifies the perspective found in many of the early Quaker writings, which depicted Eastern Christians as friendly and promising, if a bit backwards, and emphasized the local demand for the services that Quakers were providing.

After visiting Greece, the group landed briefly in ports along the Syrian coast, eventually reaching Beirut and from there exploring Lebanon and Palestine. Pearson described their first

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<sup>161</sup> Pearson, 22.

glimpses of Syria “where many sights met [their] eyes reminding [them] that [they] were in the East, - trains of laden camels, mules, and asses...veiled Moslem women, shrouded from head to foot in a white sheet, their bright eyes sometimes shining through the dark figured handkerchief...and men bending beneath loads fitted for a beast of burden.”<sup>162</sup> Pearson’s description is hardly unique, but she introduces her descriptions of the Middle East with a disclaimer that was uncommon for missionaries of the time:

There is danger, too, in passing through a country, of getting an imperfect view of many things, and the impression of each individual observer must be somewhat influenced by the medium through which the impression reaches the mind; but we proceeded slowly with the work, endeavouring to obtain information and make observations accurately, and I hope no false impression may be conveyed.<sup>163</sup>

Here is the rare recognition that missionaries were outsiders with only a short time to attempt to comprehend a society so different from their own. To the extent that the Joneses shared this perspective, however, it did not prevent them from launching many projects in their two visits.

In each port, the group visited schools and prisons and met with missionaries from different denominations. Sybil often preached to prisoners and students. After reaching Beirut, they disembarked and stayed in the city for several weeks at the home of a British missionary. The Joneses addressed students at the Syrian Protestant College and at a boys’ school led by Boutros Bustani, who also often served as their translator at public events. The Joneses also met with students, families, and teachers and learned about various missionary educational projects. After Beirut, they visited several Lebanese villages and dozens of schools, led by guides and a teenager from Damascus who served as their interpreter. Eli Jones describes countless acts of kindness from locals as he and Alfred Fox traveled the countryside, visiting schools and

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 5.

preaching to villagers.<sup>164</sup> (The women stayed behind in the town of Shimlan, possibly because of Sybil's fragile health.) Eli describes a countryside friendly to foreigners and eager for schools for boys, though woefully lacking in its attitudes towards women. According to Fox, Eli's commitment to girls' education deepened during this portion of the trip.<sup>165</sup>

From Beirut, the group traveled to Damascus and then onto Jerusalem, where they continued to visit other missionaries and schools. Sybil Jones became ill during this visit and was unable to continue, but Eli Jones and Fox kept up their work. Pearson's description of their activities, as well as the lengthy writings from Jones and Fox included in her book, focus almost exclusively on promoting Christianity and a personal relationship with Jesus through schools and other missionary institutions. As an example, Pearson describes that the men "everywhere [were] striving prayerfully to do their Master's work, that by His fresh anointing they might preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and pray for the people of Jerusalem."<sup>166</sup> Except for some references to the seclusion of women and the early age of marriage, the writings focus primarily on changing religious beliefs, not cultural practices. This early focus on religious conviction transformed in later years as the missionaries became more concerned with spreading American values and culture. Pearson does recount one evening in the village of Samaria where Eli "told them of the state of society in Western countries, and of the good results of education and piety,"<sup>167</sup> but this was the exception. More often, the Joneses found examples in Biblical stories.

Reminiscent of Quaker writings about Native Americans, Pearson also stresses that the Arabs could be equal to Americans or Europeans with education and opportunity.<sup>168</sup> In noting

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 59. A significant portion of Pearson's book relays accounts from Eli Jones and A.L. Fox. It is not clear if these accounts were originally letters or were first published as part of her narrative.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 135.

their shared humanity, however, Pearson disregards the material inequalities that frame her interactions with Arabs. In one encounter, for instance, she and the other missionaries distributed free sewing supplies to a group of women and took advantage of the opportunity to preach to the “poor, degraded women, who have evidently hearts like our own, ready to respond to the voice of kindness and love.”<sup>169</sup> She does not recognize the possibility that they were responding to the voice of free supplies and the excitement of meeting foreigners.

Due to Sybil’s illness, the Joneses returned to London before again traveling to the Middle East in 1869. On this trip, they stopped first in Alexandria and Cairo before arriving in Jerusalem. From Jerusalem, the party visited Bethlehem where they met Jacob Hishmeh, who served as their guide and translator for the rest of the journey and who would later play a leading role in the mission. From Bethlehem, the men in the group traveled to Jericho where they met with a group of villagers and offered to start a school in the town. (The route was deemed too difficult for the women.) After considering for a day, the village decided to accept the offer but the school was not opened. According to Pearson, the head sheikh of the district required permission from the Sultan for the Quakers to open a Christian school in a Muslim village, and the Quakers were unable to obtain a *firman* granting the approval. Aneesa Ma’louf, the Palestinian teacher who published an Arabic history of the mission in 1940, offers a different explanation. She claims that the Quakers could not find a single person in the town who was qualified to teach and were unwilling to start a school without a qualified native teacher. According to Ma’louf, every person in the village was illiterate despite the large numbers of learned pilgrims and scholars who passed through to visit holy places.

After the failure in Jericho and a brief return to Jerusalem, the Quakers headed north for a two-month trip to Ramallah, Nablus, Jiffneh, Damascus, and Beirut. Though Ramallah later

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 136.

became the center of Quaker activity, it does not appear that this was planned in advance. In fact, Pearson's contemporary account of the trip devotes only a few pages to their time in Ramallah. Only later, with the opening of several schools and Hishmeh's decision to relocate to the town, did it become particularly important to the Quakers. Ma'louf and other later mission historians emphasize that Ramallah was selected for a school because the people wanted a school and were capable of staffing one, not because of any particular attachment from the visitors.

When the Joneses and other Quakers arrived, they stayed in a boys' school founded by a Prussian missionary, Samuel Gobat, in 1850. Gobat had been named the Protestant Bishop of Jerusalem in 1846, a position that represented the interests of Britain and Prussia in increasing Protestant influence in the region. Based in this school, the Friends spent between three days and a week holding meetings and preaching. As Pearson describes, "a meeting was held on both evenings of our stay at Ram-Allah, where there was a great concourse of men, women, and children, eager to see the strangers, and especially to hear what a woman had to say to them. On the first evening about 300 filled the schoolhouse."<sup>170</sup> The following day, Sybil held a meeting for just the women and girls. After one of the meetings, a 15-year-old girl approached Eli in the street and asked him to start a school for girls in Ramallah. The girl, Mariam Karam, was the daughter of the boys' school teacher and had been educated in a German missionary school in Jerusalem. She became the teacher in the Hope School for girls, the first Quaker school to open in Ramallah. After several days, the Quakers moved on to Jiffneh, where they also opened a school, and Beit Jalah. Finally they visited Nablus, Nazareth, Damascus, and Beirut. In Nazareth, the Quakers sponsored several Muslim girls to attend a Christian boarding school.

Throughout the trip, the Joneses and their companions relied on the existing missionary networks and the general openness of the countryside to visitors. Despite allusions to

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 164.

government opposition to opening Christian schools among Muslims, the struggle for the right to open missionary schools in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire had largely already been won. The travelers seem to have been welcomed in every village that they visited. Pearson attributes this to the approach taken by the Joneses. Even in villages with a reputation for being unfriendly to Christians, “Eli and Sybil Jones were heard respectfully and gladly” because “no attempt [was] being made violently to combat their errors, but rather in love faithfully to show them the more excellent way.”<sup>171</sup> After this visit of several months, the Quakers returned to England and the United States and did not visit the Middle East again until 1876. During that time, they maintained written correspondence and financially supported the schools and students.

### **Early Institutions**

When the Quakers returned home, they left their translator and guide Jacob Hishmeh in charge of outreach efforts. Over the next several years, Hishmeh and others created a small network of schools, Bible groups, mother’s meetings, and meetings for worship. Only a few of the schools thrived, while others closed after a few years because of opposition or competition. The boys’ school in Jiffneh shut down shortly after Eli Jones started it because the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches opened schools in the same village.<sup>172</sup> The boys’ schools in Bireh and Nablus both closed after three years, the former after opposition from the Greek Church and the latter possibly because of budgetary reasons. The Ramallah schools were the most successful. The Hope School was quickly followed by three others because, according to Cristina Jones, Ramallah was so divided by family feuds that students would not attend school with the children of their rivals. By 1882, the Quakers were funding seven day schools with a few hundred children, in addition to supporting individual girls enrolled in other missionary

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>172</sup> Lee, 43.

schools.<sup>173</sup> Five years later, there were Friends schools in Ramallah, Jifneh, El-Janieh, Ain-Areek, Nablus, Nazareth, and two each in Jerusalem and Jaffa, as well as an orphanage in Bethlehem.<sup>174</sup>

These schools focused on Arabic literacy and Bible reading, although the curriculum was occasionally broader, particularly in the boys' schools and in villages where the schools were established for longer periods of time. For instance, Arabic classes in a boys' school in Ramallah in 1884 included Scripture History, Syntax, Algebra, Arithmetic, Elements of Knowledge and Miracles of the Holy Bible. Some of the students also learned to read the New Testament in English and to speak Turkish.<sup>175</sup> Most schools had a more limited range of subjects, however, and the core value underlying the curriculum was literacy for religious education. This was particularly true in the girls' schools, which usually had students for fewer years as the older girls left to get married. As Katharine Nekked, one of the early school teachers said in an annual report, "My whole desire in teaching the children, is to lead them to know and love the blessed Saviour."<sup>176</sup> None of the schools, however, focused on Quaker doctrine or history.

The schools served as the foundation of the mission activities and provided entrance into new villages, but Hishmeh and the schoolteachers also organized outreach to adults. They held women's meetings and religious education classes, and they hired a Bible reader who traveled around to neighboring villages. The mission had a modest start, not renting space to hold regular meetings until 1875.<sup>177</sup> By 1877, Ramallah had first-day classes<sup>178</sup> and Bible meetings, and more

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<sup>173</sup> *Thirteenth Annual Report of Friends' Mission in Syria and Palestine*, 1882. Bound in *Friends Mission Reports, 1875-1898*, n.p., Friends House Library, London.

<sup>174</sup> *Ninth Annual Report*.

<sup>175</sup> *Fifteenth Annual Report of Friends' Mission in Syria and Palestine*, 1884. Bound in *Friends Mission Reports, 1875-1898*, n.p., Friends House Library, London.

<sup>176</sup> *Fifteenth Annual Report*, 41.

<sup>177</sup> Wilcox, 9.

<sup>178</sup> Quakers usually refer to religious education classes as "first-day" school, instead of "Sunday school."



than 100 people attended meetings for worship.<sup>179</sup> By 1880, nightly Bible meetings had “a considerable number of regular attendees, who regard themselves as members of the Meeting, and as accepting the principles held by Friends.”<sup>180</sup> Nevertheless, establishing an independent Quaker Meeting was not a high priority. In keeping with Quaker tradition, the leaders focused on internal religious struggle rather than external identification or conversion. This led to some challenges for the early families who identified with the mission, as the 1888 annual report notes:

We have up till now steadfastly refused to constitute ourselves here into a special sect or denomination, always urging our hearers first of all to become Christians, and saying that then they can assume any other name they please. This is exceedingly difficult to inculcate successfully, since every individual, so far as his relationship to the government of the country is concerned, must belong to some sect...they are *looked upon* as ‘Quakers’ but do not actually possess rights, such as are conceded to other denominations.<sup>181</sup>

Apparently difficulties for Quaker-affiliates continued throughout the 1880s, even after Jacob Hishmeh received official recognition from the Pasha of Jerusalem in 1880 that allowed him to collect taxes of behalf of the denomination.<sup>182</sup>

Beginning in 1883, the medical mission and dispensary provided another way for Quakers to link desired services with religious outreach. George Hessenauer, an English-educated German doctor who learned Arabic as a child growing up in Syria, opened a clinic that reached far more people than the schools. Hessenauer asserted that he treated Muslim and Christian patients equally, but he always looked for ways to deliver a religious message with his medical treatments. “There is almost always an opportunity to say a few words concerning eternal things, and not unfrequently I have had quite a little meeting, as people will come in to

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<sup>179</sup> *Ninth Annual Report of Friends' Mission in Syria and Palestine* (Leominster, Orphans' Printing Press, 1878).

<sup>180</sup> *Eleventh Annual Report of Friends' Mission in Syria and Palestine*, 2mo., 1880. Bound in *Friends Mission Reports, 1875-1898*, n.p., Friends House Library, London, 4.

<sup>181</sup> *Nineteenth Annual Report of Friends' Mission in Syria and Palestine*, 1888. Bound in *Friends Mission Reports, 1875-1898*, n.p., Friends House Library, London, 30. This report was probably written by George Hessenauer.

<sup>182</sup> *Fourteenth Annual Report of Friends' Mission in Syria and Palestine*, 1883. Bound in *Friends Mission Reports, 1875-1898*, n.p., Friends House Library, London, 44.

the house in numbers, when I stay more than a few minutes.”<sup>183</sup> There are no indications of resistance from Muslims to medical treatment from a Christian missionary doctor in the Quaker archives, but the annual reports indicate that the Quaker Bible reader faced significant resistance in Muslim villages. He was repeatedly kicked out of towns with Muslim majorities and threatened with retaliation from the government if he returned.<sup>184</sup> Given the opposition that he faced, and the fact that Hessenauer preached Christian stories in Arabic whenever he treated patients, it seems likely to assume that Muslim patients either avoided him or tolerated the preaching only in return for the medical services. Nevertheless, in 1888 Hessenauer saw 4500 patients and his assistant distributed 7000 prescriptions<sup>185</sup> – notable numbers in a town with a few thousand residents.

Although the number of Quaker followers seemed to please Hishmeh, Hessenauer, Nakked, and the other authors of the annual reports, the group was still quite small and never grew much larger than 100 people. The small number of conversions and limited nature of the mission may have helped the Quaker institutions as they initially struggled against opposition from other Christians. As Hishmeh recounted about the early days of the mission, “when the priests understood that the people attended our meetings, they at once excommunicated them; therefore we had to suffer difficulties and persecutions for a long time.”<sup>186</sup> Yet Hishmeh goes on to say that “we are living now in peace with all the other denominations.” He was writing in 1883, only 14 years after the first Quaker efforts. Throughout the 1880s, reports of opposition from other Christians almost disappear. As Quakers opened more schools, but did not receive

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<sup>183</sup> *Sixteenth Annual Report of Friends' Mission in Syria and Palestine, 1885*. Bound in *Friends Mission Reports, 1875-1898*, n.p., Friends House Library, London, 33.

<sup>184</sup> *Seventeenth Annual Report of Friends' Mission in Syria and Palestine, 1886*. Bound in *Friends Mission Reports, 1875-1898*, n.p., Friends House Library, London, 28.

<sup>185</sup> *A Circular Letter to All Interested in the Missionary Work of Friends in the Land of the Bible* (Maine: Banner Book and Job Print, 1888), 7.

<sup>186</sup> *Fourteenth Annual Report*, 44.

large numbers of conversions, they may have seemed less of a threat to the local church hierarchies.

### **Jacob Hishmeh**

Though the mission bears the names of Eli and Sybil, Hishmeh was the true architect of the early years. Hishmeh directed the mission schools for the first 17 years and was again involved with the mission in the 1890s. Despite his central role, references to Hishmeh in missionary accounts of the early years are infrequent and sometimes inconsistent. Ma'louf describes him as "one of the oldest and best suited translators in those days."<sup>187</sup> Cristina Jones asserts that he was from Ramallah,<sup>188</sup> but a much earlier mission report states that he was originally from Nazareth but lived in Ramallah.<sup>189</sup> Pearson refers to him as a "Nazarene by birth" but also calls him "Jacob Hishmeh of Jerusalem."<sup>190</sup> The accounts agree that he had been educated in a missionary school in Jerusalem where he learned English. Eventually Hishmeh moved to Ramallah, but it is unclear if he resided there before the Joneses arrived or if he moved there with his wife Jameela and several children in order to manage the mission.

During the second portion of the Joneses' trip, Hishmeh served as their translator, Bible reader, and trip planner. He was the public face of the Quakers, giving voice to their message. Hishmeh led Bible readings in Arabic every morning and evening during the journey. At night, villagers would crowd around the strangers' tents and listen to Hishmeh read from the Arabic Bible and translate the Jones' sermons. Pearson recounts that "so interested was he in the work, that we engaged him to revisit some of the villages where we had stopped, and to visit other places where there is no permanent mission work, to read and speak to the people, and to try to

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<sup>187</sup> Ma'louf, 19.

<sup>188</sup> C. Jones, 1981, 7.

<sup>189</sup> *Tenth Annual Report of Friends' Mission in Syria and Palestine*, 2mo, 1879. Bound in *Friends Mission Reports, 1875-1898*, n.p., Friends House Library, London.

<sup>190</sup> Pearson, 149, 110.

increase their interest in best things.”<sup>191</sup> His responsibilities included managing the day schools and overseeing the other elements of the mission. Given the minimal oversight from the United States and England, Hishmeh must have had a great deal of influence in determining which schools to continue and which projects to pursue. In a memoir published by the son of Quaker missionaries, H.J. Turtle refers to “Jacob Hishmeh’s school in Palestine,”<sup>192</sup> hinting at the individual nature of the management of the school. Until 1876, when Eli Jones returned to Palestine with Henry Newman and Alfred Fox, Hishmeh was only responsible to the foreign Quakers through correspondence.

Hishmeh continued to be a central figure until his acrimonious split with the Quakers in the late 1880s. In his memoir, Turtle offers one of the two written explanations for Hishmeh’s departure. Turtle references a dispute between Hishmeh, a female teacher named Katibah al-Khuri, and George Hessenauer. Turtle implies that Hishmeh and al-Khuri had an illicit relationship that resulted in her firing and his leaving the mission and suing the Quakers for property in his name.<sup>193</sup> Al-Khuri and Hishmeh later married after the death of his first wife. The annual report from 1886 offers a less dramatic explanation for the lawsuit, citing Hishmeh’s opposition to working with a European:

The introduction of a European medical missionary into the Mission there two year ago, proved from the first, we regret to say, unwelcome to our late superintendent, Jacob Hishmeh, whose opposition, notwithstanding much patient remonstrance, at length culminated in his leaving his position. Subsequently a law suit was commenced by Jacob Hishmeh in the Turkish courts, he laying claim to a portion of the buildings belonging to the Mission. The decision of the Court has been given in our favor.<sup>194</sup>

These explanations are not necessarily inconsistent but reflect the viewpoints of their sources.

Turtle’s memoir was published in 1975 and is based on oral traditions. The official annual report

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<sup>191</sup> Pearson, 190.

<sup>192</sup> H.J. Turtle, *Quaker Service in the Middle East* (London: Friends Service Council, 1975), 22.

<sup>193</sup> Turtle, 25.

<sup>194</sup> *Seventeenth Annual Report*, 8.

would not have referenced an alleged extramarital affair between two mission employees. A letter from Pearson to Eli Jones also hints that the problems with Hishmeh went beyond professional disagreements: W.C. Allen, who visited Ramallah on behalf of the Committee of Friends Syrian Mission in 1884, reported that “there is evidence of much indolence & want of straight forwardness on Jacob’s part, & perhaps more.”<sup>195</sup> Though the split was hostile, Jacob Hishmeh is mentioned again several times in the 1890s, indicating that there was eventually some reconciliation.

This dispute is crucial to understanding the relationships between foreigners and locals during the early years of the mission. American and British Quakers visited rarely and then only for short periods of time. Most of the interaction was through letters, granting those on the ground in Palestine great control over shaping the foreigners’ understanding of the mission. Hessenauer’s arrival was the first step in creating a semi-permanent American/European presence, and it immediately led to a clash. It is not entirely clear whether al-Khuri and Hishmeh were actually having an affair, or who denounced them. We also cannot be sure if the (alleged) affair was the cause of the rift between Hishmeh and Hessenauer. Nevertheless, surviving letters indicate that the foreigners held the ultimate power to dismiss Hishmeh and enforce their moral values on the Palestinian employees. Furthermore, the missionaries were able to use the power of the British consul to assist them in the court case against Hessenauer, who had acquired British citizenship.<sup>196</sup>

As more foreigners arrived after 1889, the power dynamics between the Palestinian Quaker affiliates and foreign Quakers shifted in favor of the foreigners. The focus of the mission also expanded from (primarily) religious ideas to cultural practices. As we will see, the presence

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<sup>195</sup> Ellen Clare Pearson to Eli Jones, April 22, 1884, Jones Collection, Box 1 22V, Quaker Special Collection, Haverford College, Haverford, PA.

<sup>196</sup> *Nineteenth Annual Report*, 8.

of non-Arabic speaking American missionaries affiliated with the boarding schools began the move towards linking Christian beliefs with American, Protestant culture and values.

## Chapter 5: 1889 – 1901

*The people of Ramallah have shown an increased interest in our schools. Many are begging to have their little girls taken into the Training Home and made useful and good. Ever the answer is given them: "There is no room." May God hasten the day when there will be room for many that they may be trained for Christian teachers or wives of the future.*<sup>197</sup>

The opening of the Girls Training Home in 1889 began a shift in the goals, projects, and balance of power within the mission. The changes were gradual but substantial, especially as they occurred during a decade when the mission expanded and solidified its permanent presence in Ramallah. More Americans were physically located in Palestine and moved into leadership roles. Though the teachers in the day schools continued to be Palestinian, Americans filled the management roles left vacant by Jacob Hishmeh. Unlike Hessenauer, who had been raised in Syria and spoke Arabic fluently, these new missionaries knew little about the region and could not communicate with most of the inhabitants. Not coincidentally, the mission became more focused on spreading American Protestant norms along with its activities in religious education. While the missionaries continued to write home about their students' religious epiphanies, they also described the furniture in their homes, their clothing, and whether or not they used spoons or ate with their hands. This shift in focus aligned the Quakers more closely with other Protestant missionaries in the region at the time.

While the late 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the consolidation of American leadership over the mission, it also was a time when strong Palestinian institutions emerged. The first two decades had fostered a small but active group of Palestinian Quakers and Quaker-affiliates who were now central figures in an expanding set of institutions. The boarding schools provided the type of education that allowed more Ramallans and other Palestinians to have a voice in missionary

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<sup>197</sup> "Report on the Committee of Foreign Missions," Minutes of New England Yearly Meeting 1892 (Westerly: New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1845 - 1945), 20.

publications and influence on decisions about future projects. The schools and Monthly Meeting were firmly rooted in Ramallah and enabled Palestinians to become more powerful within the mission, eventually challenging American leadership entirely in the middle the century.

### **American Influence: Changes and Continuities**

The combination of staff turnover and the opening of the Training Home in 1889 led to increased sustained American involvement. Yet even as Americans took over several important positions, local staff and members of the meeting continued to have a substantial voice. Additionally, there were no major conflicts that divided the community along national or linguistic lines at this time. The goals of the foreign and local Quakers largely aligned, especially as preparations began for the opening of the boys' boarding school at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

After Hishmeh's removal, management of the mission fell to Hessenauer from July 1888 until his return to England in March of the following year because of his wife's ill health. His departure coincided with an administrative reorganization, as New England Yearly Meeting assumed oversight of the Ramallah mission and London Yearly Meeting of the mission in Brummana, Lebanon. This separation ended 20 years of joint-leadership and solidified the connection between Ramallah and the United States. Immediate effects on daily operations were minimal, but American management would play a large role as more foreigners became involved.

The first Americans to arrive in a semi-permanent capacity were Charles Jones and Timothy and Anna Hussey, accompanied by Timothy's sister Sarah, to oversee the transfer of property and the opening of the Girls' Training Home. Charles Jones had intended to stay in Ramallah and become Superintendent of the mission, but his wife became ill during his trip and



the Husseys decided to remain in his place.<sup>198</sup> They were joined by Ermina Farquhar, a doctor from Iowa; Huldah Leighton, who later became General Superintendent and Matron of the Mission; and Etta Johnson, an English teacher. The Husseys returned multiple times until Anna eventually died in Ramallah of a fever in 1909. Leighton stayed six years, with a break in 1892. When the Husseys returned to the United States in 1899, they were replaced by Wilfred and Della Rowntree, of Indiana, who were succeeded by Edward and Mary Kelsey in 1903. The Kelseys remained involved with the mission in various capacities for the next 40 years. While this is not an exhaustive list of the Americans who worked at the mission, it gives an idea of the pattern of involvement by American Quakers. They usually came as married couples or single women, and those who did not suffer from serious health concerns usually stayed at least several years. The number of staff members or ‘workers’ remained small, a condition that gave certain individuals a large role in creating the boarding schools and sustaining the Quaker community.

The Americans joined several active Ramallah Quakers as well as teachers and administrators from Lebanon and other parts of Palestine. Individuals were often active in several capacities. For instance, Saleem Saadi was both the clerk of the local meeting and a Bible reader. Certain family names, such as Audi and Totah, appear repeatedly in the mission reports. Within Ramallah, early converts included Elias Audi and his wife Emily Aramouni, Abdullah Totah, whose son Khalil became the first Palestinian Principal of the Friends Boys School, Aisa Abu Shahla, whose daughter Naameh was a Bible women, and Metri Shatara, whose daughter taught at the Friends Girls School for decades.<sup>199</sup> These represent some of the earliest families who converted to Quakerism. Most families aligned with the Quakers had several members

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<sup>198</sup> Lee, 14. Charles Jones returned to Ramallah briefly in 1895, again intending to take over the mission. He and his wife, Ellen, came down with typhoid shortly after arriving in Palestine, and Charles did not survive. Ellen returned to the United States (Lee, 21).

<sup>199</sup> C. Jones, 1981, 37.

involved in multiple ways, and mission posts were occasionally passed down from one family member to the next. For instance, when Martha Nusr left her post as a Bible woman to study nursing in the United States, her younger sister Hannah replaced her and later became the Matron of the Boys Training Home. The Nusr girls were from Ba'albak, not Ramallah, but still kept the position in their family.<sup>200</sup>

There were also some Palestinians and other Arabs who occupied powerful posts within the mission and stayed for long periods of time, increasing their influence. Katie Gabriel of Lebanon, for instance, was the founding Principal of the Girls Training Home and held that position for almost two decades. She later served as a Matron of the Training Home.<sup>201</sup> Gabriel had been educated in a mission school in Lebanon and previously taught in Nazareth and Beirut.<sup>202</sup> Gabriel and Leighton worked “shoulder to shoulder”<sup>203</sup> to found the school, and Gabriel continued to be central to both the operations of the school and its representation abroad. She authored many reports and letters that became the primary records available in English. Gabriel was also an important role model for many of the students, all of whom she knew in great detail. Rosa Lee, the teacher at the Boys School who later wrote a history of the mission, described one encounter between Gabriel and a student who later joined the Friends. The story is undated, but it probably took place in the 1890s or early 1900s. Lee describes how Gabriel sparked a life-changing experience. In the students’ words, “then one day, I shall never forget it, I was very naughty and Katie Gabriel took me to her room, talked with me and prayed with me. I have been different ever since that time.”<sup>204</sup> There is no doubt about Gabriel’s central place in

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<sup>200</sup> “Report on the Committee of Foreign Missions,” 1900, 27.

<sup>201</sup> *The Ramallah Messenger* 7, No. 4 (Dec. 1910), 4.

<sup>202</sup> Lee, 17.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 36.

the lives of her students. The mission reports are often deferential to Gabriel's character and expertise and there is no indication of any conflict between her and American staff members.

Although the mission superintendents were almost continuously American, the Quaker decision-making process made this hierarchy less influential than it may have been in other organizations. For instance, the minutes of New England Yearly Meeting give an account of how the decision to re-start the medical mission in 1891 was made. This was a significant and expensive decision, and it is worth noting that the foreign Quakers had made no move to replace Dr. Hessenauer when he left Ramallah. The initiative came from Palestine. The fear of a cholera outbreak in 1891 resulted in residents of outlying villages asking the mission to hire a doctor. A meeting of all of the mission workers decided to invite a Lebanese doctor, Philip Ma'louf, to join the Ramallah mission. After a three-month trial period he agreed to stay for a year and he remained in the area long after he was no longer officially part of the mission.<sup>205</sup> This process demonstrates that while there was a hierarchy, major decisions were still made with consultation from the workers and villagers applying the Quaker tradition of consensus building. The impetus for new projects and expenses could come from the top down or the bottom up.

### **The Girls Training Home**

The creation of the boarding schools fundamentally changed the nature of the mission. Constant supervision greatly expanded the degree of influence that the Quakers could have in the lives of their students. The mission workers were far more active in promoting American values and practices among the girls (and later boys) in the Training Homes than they were among the day students. English language learning gained a prominent place due to the intense nature of boarding school life and the presence of English speaking foreign staff. The Girls Training Home, and later the boys boarding school, also required much larger financial commitments to

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<sup>205</sup> "Report on the Committee of Foreign Missions," 1891, 29.

support both property and people. These investments proved to be the most lasting, however, as the boarding schools survived to become the current Friends School in Ramallah.

Unlike the day schools and medical mission, the boarding school for girls was not opened in response to demand from the local population. The missionaries described resistance to the idea of sending girls away from their families for serious education. One account relayed how “it was difficult to find girls who would come to the school. The workers visited the villages to consult sheiks and parents. One man said, ‘Talk about educating women. You might as well talk about educating those cows out on the hillside.’”<sup>206</sup> In order to entice reluctant families to send their daughters to the school, there was no tuition or charge for clothing in those first years. Resistance could not have been too entrenched, however, as by its third year of operation in 1892, the Training Home had more applicants than available spots. Fifteen students attended during the inaugural year; five came from Jerusalem, four from Ramallah, two each from Lydda and Jaffa, and one each from Beirut and Aboud, a village about 18 miles northwest of Ramallah and Beirut.<sup>207</sup> The Quakers preferred to have girls from different villages who would return to their homes as teachers or mission workers after their studies. All of the initial students were already Protestants except for two, suggesting that conversion was not a high priority in selecting students.<sup>208</sup>

From its early days, the Training Home focused on promoting American cultural practices as much as religious beliefs and academic instruction. According to Leighton, “the first thing we did was to wash and dress them neatly.”<sup>209</sup> After being properly dressed, the girls began an academic curriculum that included Scripture, reading, writing, geography, dictation, and

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<sup>206</sup> Wilcox, 10.

<sup>207</sup> C. Jones, 1981, 27.

<sup>208</sup> Lee, 16.

<sup>209</sup> “Report on the Committee of Foreign Missions,” 1890, 28.

arithmetic in Arabic, as well as reading, writing, and spelling in English. There was also a small class on translation in addition to sewing and housework. In 1892, the staff implemented an 'English-only' policy one day each week,<sup>210</sup> which was expanded to four afternoons per week during the following year.<sup>211</sup> Cooking was later added to the curriculum, over some objections from students who considered it to be demeaning.<sup>212</sup>

Although educating girls in a boarding school may have been a radical idea at the time, the Training Home promoted marriage and motherhood as the ultimate goals for women. Teaching or doing other mission work, such as leading Bible studies, was the only appropriate employment. The curriculum was designed to train girls to become good Christian wives and mothers, as defined by the Quakers. The annual report for 1898 recounted with great satisfaction that "all, with scarcely an exception, who have gone out from the home are now engaged as successful teachers and workers, or becoming the wives of worthy Christian men are [sic] capable of making their homes Christian centres and exerting in their home lives an influence for much good among their own people."<sup>213</sup> Furthermore, very few girls in the Home became Quakers. Instead of actively recruiting new members, the Quakers advocated general ideas, such as Bible literacy and cleanliness, which were not entirely inconsistent with the girls' existing religious identities.

### **Strengthening Institutions**

The other institutions affiliated with the mission became stronger and more permanent during this time. The meetings for worship became an official Monthly Meeting, and the number and location of the day schools stabilized. The Training Home graduates also supplied a

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<sup>210</sup> "Report on the Committee of Foreign Missions," 1892, 6.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 1893, 25.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>213</sup> *Report of the Missionary Work of Friends in Palestine* (Lynn: Press of Geo. C. Herbert & Co., 1898), 3.

consistent source of qualified teachers for the day school. Specific information about these institutions is somewhat sporadic, however, because the boarding schools received more attention in the mission reports. Most of the reports and minutes were intended as fundraising tools, so they naturally focused somewhat more on the projects that required more money. There are also fewer records from 1889 to 1903 than for any other period included in this thesis. No personal correspondence from the missionaries is included in the archives, and one source of mission reports concluded in 1889 while another major source, *The Ramallah Messenger*, was not published until 1903. Yet despite the relative paucity of information, it is clear that these institutions were important. They employed a significant portion of the mission staff, reached many more people than the boarding schools, and were the sole activity outside of Ramallah.

The creation of the Ramallah Monthly Meeting in 1890 gave official recognition to a meeting that already existed in practice. Monthly Meetings are the smallest institutional and geographic administrative unit within the loosely structured Quaker hierarchy. Palestinians had, in fact, been meeting for worship since the 1880s, if not before, and by 1892 an average of 65 people attended Sunday meetings in addition to the more than 50 people who regularly attended first-day school. The weekly prayer meetings also filled the schoolroom.<sup>214</sup> The initiative for the official designation as a Meeting with a capital “M” seems to have originated with foreign Quakers and represented a significant change from the prevailing viewpoint in the 1880s, which rejected the formation of a separate church.

All felt that the right time had come for establishing a Friends’ Meeting, and that such a step would tend to strengthen and help those who claimed to be with us. William Thompson [a visiting Friend] in his Bible talks, from time to time, explained to them ‘Friends’ principles,’ their views on baptism, communion, etc., all of which when translated they seemed to understand and unite with. Rules for a Monthly Meeting etc., were drawn up, united with, and signed by thirty-two persons. Thus a Friends’ Meeting

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<sup>214</sup> “Report on the Committee of Foreign Missions,” 1892, 19.

was established, and of this step we can most heartily say there has been no reason to repent.<sup>215</sup>

The Monthly Meeting continued until 1895 under Leighton's leadership, but faltered when she left because "the native members did not feel equal to carrying it alone so they laid it down."<sup>216</sup>

The Monthly Meeting was only re-started under the leadership of two other Americans, Almy and Elihu Grant, after a lapse of several years. Despite the initial lack of enthusiasm from the Palestinians members, the establishment of the Monthly Meeting was an important step in facilitating autonomy for the local congregation later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It supported a leadership and hierarchy outside of the school structure. The Monthly Meeting also recognized the permanence of the native Quaker community.

The day schools continued to thrive, and there was no shortage of teachers once girls began to graduate from the Training Home. There were usually about 200 students in six schools, three in Ramallah (Northern, Western, and Hope Schools) and one each in Jiffneh, Ophrah, and Ain Areek.<sup>217</sup> At first several, and eventually all, of the teachers were Training Home graduates. The classes in the day schools focused on literacy and Bible studies, but also included a broader range of subjects and some taught English. Academic pursuits intertwined with religious studies as the Bible was used to teach literacy in both languages. A brief report from 1899 indicates that "over two hundred children have been in attendance, and that they have committed to memory many precious texts and passages of Scripture. Lessons of cleanliness, tidiness, kindness, and truthfulness have been impressed upon their minds, besides the regular studies that are taught."<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 1891, 27.

<sup>216</sup> Lee, 20.

<sup>217</sup> *Report of the Missionary Work of Friends in Palestine*, 2.

<sup>218</sup> "Work and Life in Palestine," *The American Friend*, Vol. 6, No. 39 (Sep. 1899), 919.

The missionaries' disdain for Palestinian ways of life revealed itself most often in reports on the day schools. Etta Johnson's description of a school under the tutelage of Helanie Totah (Hélènie Totah),<sup>219</sup> a former Training Home student, illustrates the underlying prejudice. She recounts that "as good work has been done as can be expected, when we remember the relation each girl bears to her home – that of a slave. Much scripture has been taught these children, also hymns, which some of them sing in their wretched cave homes."<sup>220</sup> Even when discussing a boys' school, the report is similarly negative: "We cannot report as much satisfaction in this as in the Training Home work, since home influences counteract much of the good teaching, which they get at school." This strongly disapproving language was not common in Quakers' descriptions of Palestine, making it all the more striking when used here to criticize the status of women and the state of common homes.

### **Challenges and Opposition**

Though the 1890s were a successful period of consolidation, it was not entirely free of opposition from Orthodox Christians and Muslims. The Greek Orthodox Church continued to oppose Quaker schools by opening their own. In 1892, the student body of one of the day schools, which was specifically for boys, was decimated to only 21 students after Greek priests started a rival school. Most of the boys who remained in the Friends school had some connection to the mission.<sup>221</sup> Even with sporadic opposition from the Greek Orthodox Church, enough villages welcomed the Quakers that these setbacks did not significantly affect operations of the schools. Continued Muslim aversion to the mission and the Quakers was not featured in the reports, but we can glean that Muslim participation was rare from the inclusion of the note

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<sup>219</sup> The Quaker sources consistently spell her name 'Helanie,' possible in deference to her own preferred spelling in English, though 'Hélènie' is a more literal transliteration. In situations where there are alternative spellings, I defer to the spelling used in the archival documents most frequently and give the alternative in parentheses.

<sup>220</sup> "Report on the Committee of Foreign Missions," 1892, 7.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 1892, 7.



that four Muslim women came to a mother's meeting in 1900 and "listened to every word."<sup>222</sup>

The Rowntrees' decision to make special note of the fact that these women attended one meeting, and apparently did not walk out or explicitly refuse to listen, gives some idea of the degree of acceptance from Muslim families.

Opposition from the central government was minimal during this period, although the Quakers were not engaged in any particularly controversial work, having already opened the Girls Training Home and not yet started purchasing land for the Boys Training Home. Even in minor dealings with Ottoman representatives, there was a shift in strategies. The Quakers now appealed to the American Consul in Jerusalem, not the British, to obtain permission to build a new building for the Training Home in 1894.<sup>223</sup> The annual report from the same year indicated "the Turkish governor also of that region is now favorable to us. Opposition has been overcome by kindness and persistence in well-doing without any slackening of direct evangelization."<sup>224</sup> It was also helpful that Quakers did not evangelize to Muslims and that the efforts among the Greek Orthodox did not make many gains.

Preparations for the Boys Training Home were ongoing in the 1890s, and the school opened in 1901 with little fanfare. The prominent school grounds would not be purchased until 1905, and the buildings would not open for students until 1919. Quakers began the boys' school after years of requests for an institution that would match the Girls Training Home. The Joneses had originally focused their educational efforts on girls because of the disparity in educational opportunities, but in doing so they went against the preference for boys' education. Establishing the boys' school further solidified the Quakers' position in society and increased the role of Americans in educating some of the future leaders of Ramallah.

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 1900, 28.

<sup>223</sup> "Report on the Committee of Foreign Missions," 1894, 25.

<sup>224</sup> "New England Yearly Meeting," *The Friends' Review*, Vol. XLVIII, No. 27 (Jul 1894), 618.

With the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the American presence in the mission had increased significantly and was poised to spread further with the new staff of the boys' school. Within barely more than a decade, the mission had transformed from a collection of basic day schools and a medical clinic to burgeoning collection of established and well-funded enterprises. As the institutions became more permanent and employed more American staff, Quakers became more like most Protestant missions with foreign leadership. Americans occupied more positions of power and the boarding schools created spaces in which children's daily lives could be structured and ordered according to American Quaker values as interpreted by the school leaders.

## Chapter 6: 1901 – 1914

*This is the only way to transform Palestine. The people there must be trained to a better and truer civilization. They must learn how to work and how to makes (sic) homes; they must find out how to care for their own sick and teach their own school, and finally, how to preach the Gospel in their own tongue.*<sup>225</sup>

The quotation above from a report circulated in the United States in 1904 highlights the increasing focus of Quakers on cultural as well as religious education that continued into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As the American Consul in Jerusalem noted in a letter in 1910, Friends promoted the “freedom of women and manliness of men,” improving the intelligence, standards of living, and interpersonal relations in the villages where they worked.<sup>226</sup> While the Consul was clearly flattering the Quakers, it is notable that he discusses their progress in these areas while hardly mentioning religion. Bible study was still a central part of all the educational projects, but the missionaries seem resigned to the fact that few Palestinians would become Quaker. Although an occasional girl or boy in the Training Homes decided to join the Meeting, very few made the decision to join the families who had converted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Yet despite this, Quakers continued to invest money and time into developing stronger institutions and furthering what they saw as general Christian values.

The first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century continued the expansion and consolidation begun in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The decade began and ended with major accomplishments – the opening of the Boys Training Home in 1901 and the opening of the Meeting House in 1910. The Meeting House, a sturdy stone building constructed with funds from Baltimore Yearly Meeting, provided a permanent home for the Ramallah Quaker community and still serves as a Meeting House today. The boys’ school operated out of temporary facilities until a permanent

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<sup>225</sup> *The Ramallah Messenger* 1, No. 11, (Oct. 1904).

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, No. 2, (Jun. 1910).

building was completed in 1914, although the Ottoman military immediately occupied the building on its completion and it did not serve as a school until after World War I. The school was shut down for World War I, but the building formed the foundation for a stronger school when it reopened in 1919. The Girls Training Home continued to expand and the day schools continued to educate more than 200 students with a slightly broader curriculum than was available previously. These developments took place amid the turmoil of the beginning of the century, which saw a change in government in Istanbul in 1908 followed shortly by the worldwide tensions leading up to World War I. Most Quaker activity in Palestine stopped during the war, as all the foreigners left Palestine, and both Training Homes were occupied by military forces.

### **Training Homes**

The opening of the Boys Training Home after The War generated new opportunities for both Americans and Palestinians to work in the mission, and created an environment where mission workers had as much influence molding the lives of young men as they already had over the lives of the young women. When the New England Yearly Meeting decided to assume responsibility for funding the Boys Home, it also selected Almy and Elihu Grant to travel to Palestine to oversee its opening. When they arrived in Palestine, they spent several months studying other boarding schools and learning Arabic. Like many of the foreigners, however, Elihu became seriously ill and never truly recovered. The Grants only stayed a few years, but they were soon followed by Mary and Edward Kelsey and Rosa Lee, who arrived in 1903.<sup>227</sup> Edward Kelsey and Rosa Lee both came from strong Quaker missionary backgrounds. Kelsey's mother was a Quaker minister and his brother was also a missionary in Mexico. Lee had taught in a

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<sup>227</sup> Lee, 24. Note that this is the same Rosa Lee who authored the history of the mission that provides much of the information for this chapter.

school for Native American in Arizona.<sup>228</sup> Beginning in 1907, Ameen Nusr acted as the head teacher. Nusr was educated in an English missionary school in Jerusalem and became an active participant in the religious life of the Ramallah Friends. In addition to teaching, Nusr was the Superintendent of the Bible School and either preached or translated for a foreign preacher at Sunday Meetings.<sup>229</sup>

Unlike the girls' school, the boys' school was opened to meet demand from the local population. Elihu Grant described how a long line of boys and their parents showed up to drop off applications on the appointed day, even though the school charged 25 dollars per year in tuition, a high sum for the time. They could only accept 15 of the 80 boys who applied. The first group, who were described as "an earnest lot," included Khalil Totah, an older student who served as a student-teacher and would play an important role in the mission during the interwar period.<sup>230</sup> Nine of the students were already members of the Ramallah Monthly Meeting. Five students were members of the Greek Orthodox Church and one was a Catholic from Tayyibeh.<sup>231</sup> The class was less geographically diverse than the initial group at the girls' school, perhaps because the boys were not selected for the purpose of returning to their villages as teachers.

In 1904 the number of boys expanded to 20, but more students could hardly be accommodated without land and a school building. Classes were held in a rented house, which was severely damaged in an earthquake in 1902 and found to be unsafe. Local Friends then offered space in their houses until more permanent quarters could be found. Timothy Hussey returned in 1904 to oversee the purchasing of land for the Boys' Home. With the help of Esa

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<sup>228</sup> *The Ramallah Messenger* 1, No. 3, (Feb. 1904).

<sup>229</sup> Lee, 50.

<sup>230</sup> *Friends Boys School Magazine* 1, (1926), 6.

<sup>231</sup> Lee, 48.

Abu Shahla, a Palestinian Quaker, and another local man,<sup>232</sup> the Friends were able to purchase land after months of negotiations. This was apparently a long and arduous process that involved many trips to Jerusalem for permission from Ottoman officials, but eventually the school secured two tracts of land amounting to more than 12 acres.<sup>233</sup>

There was somewhat of a divide between the missionaries' intentions regarding boys' education and the actual results. When Edward Kelsey was searching for an appropriate plot of land, he asserted that "we do not want to divorce peasant boys from the soil and we want to give them an education consonant with the life callings they ought to pursue when we graduate them, and to that end we want to have adequate land facilities, vineyard, orchard and garden in which they can develop better ideas of country life."<sup>234</sup> Yet in fact, 19 of the first 36 students who left or graduated from the school left Palestine entirely and moved to the United States. Two had returned by 1912, and perhaps more returned later, but there was a strong trend towards emigration. Lee noted that the missionaries did not intend for so many students to travel abroad, but their preparation in foreign languages and time in an American educational setting provided economic opportunities that were not available within Palestine.<sup>235</sup>

The missionaries recognized that it would increase their standing in the area if they ran a school for boys with the same reputation as their school for girls. The 1908 report noted "the development of this department of our work is going to broaden the scope of our usefulness and give us a standing in this country that we have never had before."<sup>236</sup> It took several years to raise the standard of the boys' school to meet that of the girls' school. The facilities were less than adequate until after World War I, and the quality of instruction was inconsistent. While the girls

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<sup>232</sup> Shaheen, 37.

<sup>233</sup> Lee, 51; *The Ramallah Messenger* 2, No. 11 (Oct. 1905).

<sup>234</sup> *The Ramallah Messenger*, 1, No. 8 (Jul. 1904).

<sup>235</sup> Lee, 48.

<sup>236</sup> "Report on the Committee of Foreign Missions," 1908, 38.

were being trained for teaching and motherhood, the boys were prepared for commerce and travel abroad. The boys' curriculum included foreign languages and science, in recognition of the fact that "in this country, a knowledge of other languages carries with it much commercial value, while a knowledge of English opens up a great store house of science and literature. In the Boys' Training Home such studies as reading, arithmetic, algebra, grammar, history, geography and Bible are taught in both English and Arabic, while physics and physiology are taught only in English."<sup>237</sup> The boys also founded a temperance meeting that worked to end the sale of alcohol in Ramallah. The name of the group was the A.T.H. Society – "Against Things Harmful."<sup>238</sup> Older boys also studied Turkish and French. Beginning in 1903, the boys and girls had class together for two hours every day.<sup>239</sup> Coeducation was not common at the time, but there is little information about the extent to which the project continued or if it aroused opposition. The website of the Friends School indicates that co-education continued in a limited way, possibly only at the lower grades. Coeducation was either limited or simply of little interest to the missionaries writing the reports who gave the matter little attention.

As the boys' school struggled to raise its academic standards, the Girls Training Home continued to expand. By 1904 it was home to 34 students<sup>240</sup> and by 1909 there were 47.<sup>241</sup> Katie Gabriel retired in 1906 and was replaced by Alice Jones, who remained Principal until 1929. The girls now paid tuition and provided their own clothes, but even with these deterrents there was still competition for the 50 available spots in 1912. The amount of tuition depended on the family's ability to pay and did not seem intended to prohibit girls who wanted to attend from doing so. Lee noted that "girls from cities pay more than girls from the country villages, and yet

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<sup>237</sup> Lee, 48.

<sup>238</sup> "Report on the Committee of Foreign Missions," 1903, 27.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid. 1, No. 7 (Jun. 1904).

<sup>241</sup> Ibid. 6, No. 1 (Mar. 1909).

sometimes a girl from a village, who can pay only a small sum a year, is received in preference to one from the city who is likely to have more opportunities.”<sup>242</sup>

Lee provides a description of a typical day in for a student in the Training Home. The day begins at 6 am. After dressing, there is a time for silent prayer and then each girl cleans her assigned section of the Home. Afterwards, they begin academic study in English and Arabic. Classes include Scripture, reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography and history. The afternoons are spent sewing, singing, or taking long walks.<sup>243</sup> Most of the girls also participate in the Christian Endeavor Society, which promoted peaceful living and provided material assistance to blind or sick individuals in Ramallah. From Lee’s perspective, life in the Training Home was orderly, peaceful, and most importantly, clean.

Until 1907, all of the students in both Training Homes were Christian, but in that year the Mudir of Ramallah (similar to a mayor or governor) requested that his sister Haldiya (Khaldiyya) be admitted to the home. The missionaries took great interest in Haldiya’s progress and included regular updates on her in *The Ramallah Messenger*. The Quakers were initially worried about the political ramifications of accepting a Muslim student, but accepted her after the Mudir assumed responsibility. Edward Kelsey described Haldiya as “a headstrong and badly spoiled child” but noted, “she is gradually yielding to the molding influences of the home.”<sup>244</sup> Requirements were slightly modified for Haldiya, allowing her to return home on Sundays to avoid attending Meeting. During the other six days of the week, however, she participated in prayers and Bible study with the Christian students. She was required to take off her veil on the school grounds but allowed to wear it outside.<sup>245</sup> After two years at the Home, she began to stay on Sundays and

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<sup>242</sup> Lee, 31.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>244</sup> “Report on the Committee of Foreign Missions,” 1908, 37.

<sup>245</sup> *The Ramallah Messenger* 4, No. 3 (Sep. 1907), 7.



simply refrained from standing during prayer or singing Christian hymns.<sup>246</sup> Later that year, Haldiya did not return to school after a visit to her home for Ramadan. She secretly sent a note saying she was not allowed to come back, prompting Alice Jones to visit her house. There Jones was told that Haldiya's step-mother thought she was educated enough because she was more educated than the man she was intended to marry. Eventually, Haldiya convinced her family to let her return to school.<sup>247</sup> Here the story of the first Muslim student ends, as *The Ramallah Messenger* was no longer published and Haldiya was not usually mentioned in the annual reports. Her story received more attention than any other girl in the *Messenger*, revealing a keen interest in the development of the first Muslim student to be exposed to the atmosphere of the Training Home. Even as the missionaries clearly delighted in Haldiya's decision to be active in Christian activities, such as a Bible play, there was no explicit pressure to convert her or to use the Mudir's apparent acceptance to reach out to other Muslim students.

### **Day Schools**

Unlike the Training Homes, several of the day schools regularly had Muslim students in attendance.<sup>248</sup> The number of schools remained constant at six, though the number of students increased to more than 300 in 1911.<sup>249</sup> This total may have included the students in a boys' school in El Bireh, which was not directly administered by the Friends but maintained close ties with them through its teacher, Nahmi Shalah, a Training Home graduate. The Quakers had attempted to establish a school in El Bireh for several years but faced opposition from the Muslim Mudir and competition within the Christian families.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> *The Ramallah Messenger* 6, No. 1 (Mar. 1909), 7.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 4 (Dec. 1909), 10.

<sup>248</sup> "Report on the Committee of Foreign Missions," 1905, 27.

<sup>249</sup> *The Ramallah Messenger* 8, No. 1 (Jun. 1911), 7.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid* 1, No. 12 (Nov. 1904), 2; *Ibid.* 2, No. 3 (Feb. 1905), 2.

The teacher qualifications, curriculum, and organization of the day schools continued to improve. In 1904, the Ramallah schools were reorganized according to age instead of location. Students were required to pay for their own textbooks. This was part of a move away from providing services for free in order to avoid creating dependence.<sup>251</sup> By 1908, all of the Quaker day schools were co-educational and all their teachers had attended the Training Home. The curriculum now included English language instruction. There was a clear distinction between the purposes of the day school curriculum and that of the Training Homes. The 1908 report noted “it is possible for these [day school students] to obtain therein a good grounding in the fundamentals and a thorough drill in the Bible that will equip them for usefulness in any of the humbler walks of life.”<sup>252</sup> These humbler walks of life did not usually include travel abroad or a university education, which many of the Training Home graduates pursued.

### **Evangelization**

The Quakers in Ramallah began facing pressures from home to do more evangelizing and less educating. The New England Yearly Meeting provided a significant amount of money, not to mention the many individuals who contributed privately, but the number of Quakers remained quite small. The foreigners in Ramallah took special care to convince their supporters and critics that evangelization permeated everything they undertook in Ramallah. This was a delicate balancing act, because they could not stress conversion without looking like failures. As Edward Kelsey wrote in response to the criticism:

Spiritual results in any line of Christian activity are hard to be computed. Judging from reports of this work in the past some friends at home have felt that the religious side of the work has been under-emphasized. This may have been so in the reports but an intimate acquaintance with the work speedily convinces one that it has not been so in

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<sup>251</sup> The schools were apparently flexible in accepting payments. One student paid her fees in eggs. *The Ramallah Messenger* 5, No. 4 (Dec. 1908).

<sup>252</sup> “Report on the Committee of Foreign Missions,” 1908, 38.

reality. The whole town has been wonderfully changed as a result of missionary activity. The atmosphere of both homes is such that it develops strong Christian characters.<sup>253</sup>

Kelsey is vague on the actual benefits of the mission, perhaps because the successes that he could list would not satisfy his readers. Increased literacy, cleanliness, delayed marriage – these had all been praised in other Quaker publications but have only a tangential connection to Christian or Quaker beliefs.

*The Ramallah Messenger* devoted many articles to convincing readers that the mission emphasized the gospel in the educational curricula, including an entire issue in 1903. The second issue proclaimed “the Mission is and always has been thoroughly evangelical. Its watchword is ‘Teach the Gospel’. All else is subordinate and incidental.”<sup>254</sup> Yet in the same year in another publication, Almy Grant succinctly described the rather passive approach that the missionaries took to conversion. “We try to fit [the students] for general Christian usefulness (*sic*), for we know we are not training them for any one church, and many of them are satisfied to remain in the church in which they have been brought up, Greek or Protestant. Still Friends’ doctrines are taught here and some of our graduates accept them and wish to become Friends.”<sup>255</sup> This approach is fairly consistent with Quaker attitudes towards evangelism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but perhaps readers in the United States had expected more Palestinians to be convinced once they were exposed to Quaker teachings. The missionaries did not try to explain that conversion in Palestine takes on an entirely different meaning from conversion in the United States. Their readers probably did not understand that religion was a social identity in Palestine, not a personal choice.

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid. 1904, 29.

<sup>254</sup> *The Ramallah Messenger* 1, No. 2, (Jan, 1903), 3.

<sup>255</sup> “Report on the Committee of Foreign Missions,” 1903, 28.

Even though they were few, there were still some new members of the Meeting after the turn of the century, and these stories figured prominently in mission reports. Alice Jones wrote in 1908 that “You will be interested to know that one of the girls in the first class...has expressed a wish to unite with Friends. She is a thoughtful girl and after reading and talking with some of us in regard to Friends principles, she is convinced that they are her principles also.”<sup>256</sup> Others, like Philip Ma'louf, the medical doctor from Lebanon, were eventually referred to as “Friends” even though there is not a specific entry recording their acceptance into the Meeting.<sup>257</sup>

Evangelism and Bible study were intimately intertwined with medical services and education. An excerpt from Hannah Nusr's journal when she was the Bible woman illustrates this point: “Spoke about the Bread of Life that sustains the soul and gave a piece of soap, a towel and a wash cloth to the woman...Washed three little girls' hands, faces and feet, cleaned the room and put things out into the sun.”<sup>258</sup> Even in her position as Bible Woman, which allowed her a much greater focus on the Bible than, for instance, that of a geography teacher, Nusr still spent a great deal of energy promoting cleanliness and health.

It seems that many of the missionaries believed that their educational and other projects could lay the foundation for future evangelism, even as they accepted the slow pace of conversions. The mission report from 1906 stated: “We feel that New England Yearly Meeting has just obtained a fairly good foothold in this land and that if we are faithful to the trust committed to us we may yet become one of the chief factors in the evangelization of the Holy Land.”<sup>259</sup> In fact, the evangelization of the holy land was practically at an end for the Quakers,

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<sup>256</sup> Ibid. 1908, 41.

<sup>257</sup> Such events would have been recording in the Minutes of the Meeting, but these were lost in 1940.

<sup>258</sup> Lee, 19.

<sup>259</sup> “Report on the Committee of Foreign Missions,” 1906, 27.

while their foothold in the Holy Land related almost entirely to their prominent place in the educational landscape of Palestine.

## Chapter 7: The Interwar Years and Beyond

*A wealthy man from Gaza wanted us to teach his children the Koran and not allow them to attend our prayers. We replied that we had much respect for the Koran and recommended that he send his children where it is taught. As for us we were out to teach the Bible, and to have prayers after our custom without compelling any student to subscribe to them or to repeat anything against his conscience. As a result of 'sticking to our colors' that wealthy man from Gaza of Samson sent us six boys and girls.<sup>260</sup>*

When the mission re-opened after World War I, the world outside the school doors had changed drastically. The Ottoman Empire no longer existed, Palestine was now under British rule, and the scene was set for the coming conflict between Palestinians and Jewish immigrants. Nevertheless, the schools thrived. Friends faced no more difficulties getting permits to build and added or improved several school buildings. After *The Messenger* stopped publishing in 1911, there is a gap in detailed reports until 1930 when the *Friends School News* began publishing regular updates from the school. We can tell that between 1919 and 1930, the number of students increased and a significant portion of the student body was now Muslim. In 1937, the Friends Girls School, as it was re-named after World War I, had 258 students and 80 boarders. The Boys School had 190 students, including 102 boarders.<sup>261</sup> Reports indicate a growing pride in the diversity of the school and a tolerance for other religions: "Another Moslem was in Victoria Hammush's office when it was time for prayer. With dignity he spread his cloak on the floor, turned his face toward Mecca and said his prayers. We are glad that a Quaker school can be a place of prayer for all creeds."<sup>262</sup> Though the boarding schools grew, the day schools closed entirely in 1930 because of a lack of funding.

In 1930, Khalil Totah became Principal of the Boys School. Totah had been a student teacher in the first class at the School before he traveled to United States in 1906 to study at Oak

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<sup>260</sup> *Friends Schools News* 6 (Oct. 1935), 7.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.* 8 (Dec. 1937), 5.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.* 6 (Oct. 1935), 7.

Grove School in Vassalboro, Maine, and then Clark College in Massachusetts, where he got his A.B. in 1911. He then returned to Palestine and taught at Boys Training School for two years before returning to the United States to pursue a Masters Degree at Columbia University's Teachers College. He again returned to Palestine and served as the Principal of the government-run Men's Training College in Jerusalem before returning to Columbia to receive his doctorate in Education.<sup>263</sup> He then returned to the Friends Boys School in 1927 as a teacher before being promoted to Principal, a position that he held until 1944. Totah's background is important because he was one of the first 'native sons' with an educational background that made him eminently qualified to run the school. Totah's elevation to Principal was a conscious decision by the current Principal, Willard Jones, that the time was appropriate for a Palestinian to assume leadership. The concept of 'devolution,' or passing control of foreign missions to local leadership whenever possible, was not articulated until 1932 but Quakers were beginning to implement the policy.<sup>264</sup>

Totah was at the center of the greatest internal crisis to shake the mission throughout its history. After serving for many years as the Principal of the Boys School and Secretary of the Meeting, Totah had become a powerful figure in Ramallah and essentially dominated the mission. He wanted to centralize oversight of the two schools into one position, which presumably he would fill. His suggestion aroused opposition from both the Friends Girls School administration, which feared being overshadowed by the Boys School, and the American Quakers, who feared losing their valuable property in Ramallah should the Palestinians decide to nationalize the mission land. The conflict was more complicated than this simple description suggests, but it essentially became a division along national lines, with American Quakers in

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<sup>263</sup> C. Jones, 1981, 53.

<sup>264</sup> Ricks, 37.

Indiana encouraging Totah to leave while many Palestinian supporters at the Boys' School demanding that he stay. The dispute turned acrimonious, and only ended when Totah resigned and moved to the United States.<sup>265</sup> The Totah affair shattered the long history of amicable cooperation between foreign and Palestinian Quakers and indicated the failure of Friends to successfully implement devolution.

The post-World War II history of the schools has fluctuated with the situation in Palestine. During periods of stability and openness, the schools flourish, but enrollment suffers during times of violence and travel restrictions. In 1990 all the grades were made co-educational, and the Friends Girls School became the elementary school while the Boys School was converted in the secondary school. In 2001, the position of School Director was created to oversee management of both schools, much as Totah had envisioned decades earlier. The position was first held by an American, and is currently held by a Palestinian Quaker. Meeting continues every week in the same Meeting House that was dedicated in 1910, though attendance is sparse and foreign visitors often make up the bulk of participants. Most Palestinian Quakers now live in the United States.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis explored how Quakers came to have such a visible presence in Ramallah and, in doing so, illustrate one example of the complexity of relations between missionaries and the communities in which they worked. Through an analysis of Quaker archives, we can extrapolate from their interactions with local Palestinians and later, local Quakers, to challenge frameworks that categorize missionaries as colonial without examining the nuances of individual missions.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>266</sup> This thesis attempts to address this issue using Quaker sources, primarily in English. Further study would benefit from integrating this information with Arabic archives that include documents from individuals who did not join the



Though it cannot be ignored that Quakers and other American and European missionaries operated in a colonial context, that framework cannot account for the fact that some missionary efforts were joint projects between foreigners and locals. These were not local collaborators who exploited their countrymen for material or social gain, but partners who chose to work with the mission out of personal belief.

Yet even significant participation of Palestinians does not negate the fact that the Quakers were attempting to influence a relatively less powerful group to change their religious identity and way of life. Schools and medical services, particularly attempts to clean up a population seen as dirty or contagious, can be seen as expressions of domination that are just as controlling as physical or military occupation. Timothy Mitchell argues this in relation to the reorganization of schools and public spaces in Cairo from the 1860s to World War I. Mitchell claims that the new “streets and schools were built as the expression and achievement of an intellectual orderliness, a social tidiness, a physical cleanliness, that was coming to be considered the country's fundamental political requirement.”<sup>267</sup> The new developments were a conscious attempt to re-shape Cairo into a modern, colonial city using a French model.

Schools were one way to assert control over people by imposing a physical and temporal power that is, as Mitchell and Foucault suggest, coercive, but also diffuse and creative. The Quaker schools clearly imposed a specific type of order on their students and encouraged them to take that order into their homes. But the Quaker mission differs from many of Mitchell's examples of government reform in that individuals had the choice to join the mission and send their children to the Quaker schools. The political and economic benefits of being affiliated with an American religious group were factors in that decision, but since relatively few people

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mission and with the archives of the Greek Orthodox Church in Ramallah. Additionally, some of the Quaker archives are housed in Indiana Yearly Meeting and could not be accessed for this study.

<sup>267</sup> Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 63.

decided to accept that affiliation even at the height of the Quaker presence in Ramallah, the benefits must not have been so great as to lure or coerce many people into joining. Furthermore, framing all missions as spaces of domination deprives the local mission workers of the autonomy to make their own decisions regarding which aspects of the foreign religion or culture they chose to adopt and how they integrated the two cultures in their particular context.

This thesis has shown that Palestinian Quakers had a significant degree of influence on the mission within broad parameters established by the Americans. The schools and Meeting served as a space where Palestinians and American could interact on the basis of a common set of Quaker values. That foundation of cooperation and even Palestinian leadership, though later shaken by the Totah controversy, helped the mission gain legitimacy in Ramallah and firmly established the schools as permanent elite institutions. The schools continue to serve as a meeting ground for Americans and Palestinians and a window into how these interactions have both reflected and shaped the power dynamics between and within Quaker communities in both countries.

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